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CONTENTS

NOTES OF THE WEEK ... 173

LEADING ARTICLE:

Reparations and Evacuation ... 176

MIDDLE ARTICLES:

The Crisis in the Cotton Trade.

By S. S. Hammersley ... 177

The Haig Monument. By

D. S. MacColl ... 179

The Nation and Drink—IV ... 180

Holiday Homicide. By H. C.

Harwood ... 181

Polish Interlude—IV. By

J. B. Priestley ... 182

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR 183

THE THEATRE:

Looking Backward. By Ivor

Brown ... 185

BROADCASTING ... 186

LITERARY COMPETITIONS:

Set by Ivor Brown ... 186

BACK NUMBERS—CXXXVIII 188

REVIEWS:

Two Omnibus Volumes. By

Edward Shanks ... 189

Wrought Iron and its Decora-

tive Use ... 190

Viniana ... 191

The New Spirit in the Russian

Theatre ... 191

REVIEWS—continued

Italy ... 192

The Pope is King ... 192

The Pleasant Career of a

Spendthrift ... 194

NEW FICTION. By L. P. Hartley

Strange Moon ... 194

Dark Star ... 194

Shanty Irish ... 194

Windfall's Eve ... 194

ACROSTICS ... 196

THE CITY ... 197

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NOTES OF THE WEEK

IN his stand for British interests and British rights at The Hague, Mr. Snowden has had behind him a remarkable unanimity of popular opinion. Since the war there has been no issue of foreign policy on which our people have declared themselves so unitedly and so effectively. The Premier, who was foolishly solicited to go to The Hague and who wisely declined, sent instead a telegram that was useful because it publicly assured Mr. Snowden of the whole-hearted backing both of the Government and the nation. The effect on the Conference and on the tone of the foreign Press was immediate. The past week has seen the dropping of all pretence that our Chancellor was playing a lone hand or had exceeded his instructions and a resigned acceptance of the fact that he meant what he said and had not the least intention of budging. With that understood, the delegates of the opposition, grumbling but submissive, got down to the business of devising ways and means of altering the Young Plan to meet the British point of view.

Financially Mr. Snowden's stand may not be of much immediate moment to the British taxpayer. But politically and from the standpoint of prestige it will count for a great deal. A principle has been established which, whatever the future developments of the reparations and war-debts problems, is most unlikely to be abandoned—the principle that, having hitherto made most of the financial sacrifices, Great Britain is henceforward entitled to get back a little of her own. But what Mr. Snowden has also established is the fact that when Britain is sure of her ground and tenacious in holding it, the Continent has no option but to give way. It is because there has been so little real leadership in British policy since the Armistice, so much timidity and such an excess of acquiescence in doubtful courses, that Europe has been so long in reaching even its present precarious equilibrium. Mr. Snowden has furnished an object-lesson that both Britain and the Continent may profitably remember. We deal with the Hague Conference in detail in a leading article.

As we go to press the cotton operatives are meeting the owners in Manchester to decide if it is

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possible to settle their dispute by arbitration. The result of the conference will mean a great deal to the immediate future of Lancashire, but little or nothing to the industry as a whole. Why this is so is made very clear by the article we publish from the pen of Mr. Hammersley, the M.P. for Stockport. The trouble over wages, as Mr. Hammersley insists, has only become crucial because the manufacturers see at present no other way of putting themselves on a competitive basis except by reducing wages. The reorganization of the industry into large scale units, which they know to be necessary, is a closed door to them because the banks refuse to make the necessary sacrifices. Mr. Hammersley is undoubtedly right in putting squarely upon the banks the chief responsibility for the failure of the policy of amalgamation. In the past they have been far too easy-going in their advances to firms whose financial foundations were rotten. In the present they are far too resolute in seeing to it that whatever sacrifices have to be made shall be made by others and not by themselves. Only Government pressure and a Government loan can put the cotton industry on the road to health.

One of the most effective successes of the League of Nations has been its liquidation of the various problems arising out of the Graeco-Turkish war. Since the ratification of the Treaty of Lausanne a situation of great delicacy has been handled with infinite tact and patience, and to-day such questions as the exchange of the Turkish and Greek minorities and the compensation awards for confiscated Turkish and Greek property in Thrace and in Anatolia have been settled to the satisfaction of both countries. There still remains the problem of those Constantinople Greeks who were Turkish subjects and who at the time of the Greek debacle in Asia Minor fled from the wrath of the victorious Kemalist troops. Convinced that the Allies would never allow the Turks to reoccupy their former capital, they had been careful to retain their Turkish nationality and to legalize their flight by obtaining passports from the Turkish officials of the former Sultan. These Greeks are now claiming the right to return to Constantinople and to resume possession of their confiscated property. On this point, however, the Angora Government is adamant, and its recent rejection of the Greek offer to submit the dispute to a neutral arbitration seems to close the door on any hope of a compromise. From the Greek point of view the loss is serious, for, while the number of these refugees is insignificant, they belonged to the richest families in Constantinople, and the value of their Turkish property is considerable.

The escape of the three Italian political exiles from the deportation island of Lipari is likely to be a source of considerable embarrassment to the Fascist Government, and up to the present the Italian Press has maintained a significant silence about the whole affair. Nor is the fact that the three men bear well-known names (one of them is a nephew of Francesco Nitti, the former Italian Prime Minister) calculated to diminish Fascist annoyance at the authentic

publicity which will now be given to Fascist methods of political suppression. We see no reason to doubt the statements, which have already been published in the French and German Press by the three refugees, regarding the conditions which prevail in the Mediterranean and Siberia. Their offence was that they assisted Signor Turatti, the Italian Socialist leader, to leave Italy when he was threatened with the same fate as Professor Matteotti. For that offence they were arrested, handcuffed together with common criminals, and transported in chains to the island of Lipari, where four hundred Fascists are employed in guarding five hundred political prisoners, the vast majority of whom have never had any form of trial and are in some cases ignorant of the delinquency which has incurred the Fascist wrath. Similar conditions prevail on the other deportation islands of Ponza and Ustica. These conditions have long been known in foreign official circles. In pre-war days the escape of a political exile from Siberia never failed to arouse the sympathy of all democratic peoples, but to-day a Europe disillusioned by the war and inured to Bolshevik cruelties is apparently indifferent to a similar escape from the clutches of Fascism.

In this issue, the contributor who has been writing for us a series of articles on 'The Nation and Drink' concludes his criticisms and suggestions. Without endorsing every paragraph of his articles, we may ask what reasonable answer there is in most of his questions. Why should genuine hotels and restaurants be treated virtually as if they were public-houses? Why should the fate of a licence depend on the fortuitous composition of the licensing authority? Why should obstacles be put in the way, in many areas, of improvements in public-houses? Why should brewers and licensees be expected to spend money on improvements without security of tenure? Why should members' clubs, in which, according to sane legal decision, liquor is not "sold" but merely "distributed," be subjected to almost the same treatment as public-houses? Why should the Exchequer impose demands on the several kinds of alcoholic beverages without regard to the effect of those demands on sobriety, health, and culture, and, intervening to acquire a huge revenue, not also insist on the authenticity of the beverages absorbed by the mulcted public? The chief organ of the licensed victuallers, naturally differing from our contributor on some points, has been good enough to say, with reference to these articles, that for three-quarters of a century the SATURDAY has been known as a paper independent of cant and concerned for the truth. It hopes that the articles will influence the Royal Commission on Licensing: we have no such hope, for that Commission is wrongly constituted. It is as if seraglio attendants and roués were appointed to consider the marriage laws.

Following bad precedents, against which we have protested often enough, the Government have so constituted the Royal Commission on Licensing as to include representatives of the

sectional interests at war over the question at issue. It cannot be too often or too strongly said that a Royal Commission should be, not a congregation of the spokesmen of the parties to a dispute, but a body of impartial investigators. It is absurd to include teetotal leaders in the Commission, and not less absurd to include persons who head liquor trade organizations. Whether in regard to licensing or any other controversial matter, the proper place for sectional spokesmen is the witness-box. There they can state their case as all cases should be stated, with the freedom of the advocate, without the compunctions which must trouble even the least scrupulous of jurymen or of judges in any endeavour to combine advocacy with impartiality.

As things are, we are threatened with the stale and utterly unprofitable spectacle of anti-alcohol fanatics wrangling with the vendors of drink, and either arriving at a compromise which suits no one or issuing majority and minority reports to the increased confusion of the public mind. To be sure, the personnel of the Commission is not yet complete. But what can the addition of representatives of the ordinary public effect? The fanatics and the traders are already there. All that the addition of a few ordinary citizens will do is to give a spurious weight to a hopelessly packed body, not the less packed because both extremes have their nominees there. Had the Government been wise, they would have begun by appointing those two eminent and disinterested experts, Lord Askwith and Dr. Arthur Shadwell, and composed the rest of the Commission of men and women of affairs who were neither in one camp nor the other.

Westminster Abbey is permanent; the Dean of Westminster is, to alter the famous phrase, a transient if unembarrassed functionary. When it comes to choosing between the preservation of the beauty of a permanent national possession and the working convenience of its temporary custodian, the nation, aware that Deans are more easily replaced than the Abbey can be restored after their tamperings with it, will not hesitate to choose. It may be, and doubtless is, very awkward for the Dean to be attached to an ecclesiastical building which does not provide facilities for the working purposes of its clergy. But he should have set out with the resolve to secure the additional accommodation otherwise than at the expense of the beauty of the Abbey. It is at least conceivable that Westminster scholastic grounds could in some degree have been made available to him. However that may be, he is not entitled to flout perfectly intelligent public opinion. The Abbey is much too important to be defaced at the will of any temporary incumbent of the Deanery.

The railwaymen have given notice to terminate the year-old agreement by which a two and a half per cent. reduction on all wages and salaries was voluntarily effected. The lower costs of operation directly due to this all-round sacrifice, and the

economies in other directions that it indirectly stimulated, have undoubtedly put the railways in a much better shape than they were in twelve months ago. The shareholders, who it is often forgotten are more numerous than the employees, have had already some slight benefit from this improvement. But the process of reorganization has not gone far enough to enable the companies to return yet awhile to the old rates of pay. Just when they are making a sustained and intelligent effort to win back traffic and to share in the development of road transport, they cannot afford to cripple themselves by paying £3,000,000 a year more in wages. The railwaymen, none the less, are right in registering a warning that they do not regard the reduction they agreed to last August as permanent. But when the situation is fully and frankly laid before them they will probably conclude that, in the interests of their industry, it should continue for another year.

Haig and Haig: well enough as an order at one sort of bar, but at the bar of public opinion, at which the sculptor is arraigned, the retort is, "Look at this picture and at that!" The monumental warrior on the horse whose too solid flesh has far from melted pleases few. Haig was not a man of genius, but he was a fine example of a type rightly cherished by this nation. The quiet distinction of the man, and it was physical to begin with, most certainly ought to be preserved in any memorial. Then, too, the horse, though it need not be a portrait of any particular charger used by Haig, ought to be of the type admired and habitually preferred by such a leader of the possibly obsolescent cavalry. The proposed statue is discussed, with wisdom and wit, on another page by Mr. D. S. MacColl, who long ago made history in art criticism with his contributions to this paper. He writes on such a matter of controversy with peculiar authority. For ourselves, we applaud the sculptor's work as such, but cannot accept it as a memorial to Haig.

Lord Horne was one of the commanders in the war whose reputation has suffered nothing since its close. A Scotsman with a gift for taciturnity, he kept out of all the post-Armistice controversies, regarding them, as one of his simple, thorough, concentrated nature would, as bad for the Service and therefore to be discountenanced by its loyal sons. Moreover, he was first and last a gunner, a leader, in other words, in the most technical and highly specialized branch of the Army. It was as an artillery officer that he first made his name in South Africa and whether he was the actual author of the creeping barrage in the late war or not, he at least contributed very largely to its successful working. With the quiet tenacity he showed all through his career he held his ground with the First Army when the German offensive of 1918 scattered the Portuguese on his left, and to him fell the honour of carrying the strongest sectors of the Hindenburg line. His death leaves the British Army the poorer by the loss of one who lived solely for his profession, rose high in it without ever finding his promotion grudged by anyone, and was a sterling embodiment of the qualities that belong to "an officer and a gentleman."

REPARATIONS AND EVACUATION

OUR one definite success at the Hague Conference has, at the time of writing, been in regard to reparations in kind. These have grown out of all proportion to anything contemplated by the framers of the Treaty of Versailles. All that they had in mind was that Germany should supply certain specified quantities of products which might be immediately useful to France, Belgium and Italy in the reconstruction of their industries. As the mark tumbled down Germany found herself unable to pay reparations in any other form than her coal and other products, and the Dawes Plan, which rehabilitated the mark, found this system too convenient to discontinue. The chief concern of those who worked the plan was the stabilization of Germany's credit, and no limit was placed on the amount of reparations that could be paid in kind except such as might be imposed by the Transfer Committee to prevent difficulties with the German Exchange. And in fact deliveries in kind have rapidly risen since the stabilization of the mark.

What, in fact, took place was dumping on a scale never known before, and British exports have been the chief sufferers by this disturbance of free competition in the international market. Actually, the payment of reparations by Germany operated as an artificial preference to German exports, and though Germany was not gaining from this preference, we were losing heavily. The Young Plan certainly proposed to reduce the amount of deliveries in kind from some thirty-seven to fifteen millions a year, but this reduction was to be gradual over a period of ten years, and even fifteen millions represents a very serious handicap to the British export trade. This is one of the three objections taken by Mr. Snowden to the Young Plan, and he has been very ably seconded by Mr. William Graham in his demonstration of the injustice to British trade. To adapt the memorable phrase of Lord Derby, it was making fresh devastated regions in the unemployment of South Wales, Clydeside, Lancashire and Yorkshire, in order to repair the devastated regions of France and Belgium. The injustice was so monstrous that it has been acknowledged by the French, and there is good reason to hope that it will be greatly abated if not entirely abolished. It shows how miserably the whole question of reparations has been handled in the past that a system of payment which will make British unemployment as fast as it clears off Germany's debts to the late Allies, is hailed as a triumph for our diplomacy.

Two other British grievances against the Young Plan have been so far admitted that they have been referred to committees, and the practical question for Mr. Snowden will be whether he will accept the modifications which they will doubtless

propose or hold out for the whole British demand. The total sum involved is not very large as reparations figures go, but it is not negligible. The proportions under which reparations payments were to be allocated to the Allies were fixed at the Spa Conference, and have remained unaltered since. The Young Plan, however, in reducing the total annual liability of Germany from £125,000,000 to £99,500,000, proposes not only to alter the percentages as between the Powers, but to create a wholly new class of debenture-holders. The actual loss to Great Britain under the rearrangement of percentages has been worked out at £2,500,000 a year, most of which for some mysterious reason goes to increase the Italian annuity. This is not a gross loss, it must be understood, but a loss in the account as between ourselves and our late Allies. All lost by the reduction of Germany's payments by thirty millions, but our proportionate loss has a supplement of two and a half millions which is distributed as a bonus to the other creditors.

Further, not only do we receive less in proportion, but under the Young Plan our security is diminished. Of the £100 millions (in round figures) which Germany is to pay, one-third is to be preferred or debenture debt, and the rest is ordinary debt whose claims rank after it. The debentures are given to the other creditors; we are to take payment in deferred shares only. Obviously there is room in these strange arrangements for an endless variety of compromise, but the objection in principle is as great against one form of compromise as any other. Parity of rights to payment on the basis of the Spa percentages is the only just principle of allocation, and any compromise which concedes a part but not the whole of our claim is in the nature of a *douceur* which it would be difficult for this country to accept with dignity.

The difficulty in all the arrangements proposed under the Young Plan is to understand the principle under which they have been devised. The root of the trouble seems to be the different interpretation put by ourselves and France on the clauses of the Versailles Treaty governing the relations between the military occupation and the payment of indemnities. Our view is that military occupation should automatically cease at the end of the prescribed ten years, but the French view is that occupation is a guarantee of payment liable to continue so long as there is the slightest room for doubt whether the payments will actually be made. The main object of the Young Plan was to bring about early evacuation of German territories by the Allied armies, and its financial proposals are merely steps towards this end. We are anxious to evacuate at the earliest possible moment, but France is not; and the Young financial proposals are only intelligible on the theory that France must be offered an inducement to early evacuation, and that we will pay the inducement in lower percentages and in inferior guarantees. The new disabilities that we are subjected to are in fact in the nature of a bribe which it is proposed that we should pay in order to get

our interpretation of the Versailles Treaty and our general views about the conditions of European peace accepted. They are, in fact, put in as a disguised British subscription to the Locarno spirit and the Kellogg Pact.

Frankly, two and a half millions a year would be a cheap subscription if thereby we could be assured of a moral conversion which would lead to a reduction of armaments and a settled policy of international peace. But there is no such guarantee. Our own Government have spoken with two voices on the evacuation of German territory by our own army. Sometimes we are told that it will take place before Christmas, and then again we are told that our army will be withdrawn when the French army is withdrawn. But the date of the French evacuation is left exceedingly doubtful, and its evacuation is in any case to be conditional on the appointment of a new "Committee of Verification and Control" with vague powers and of uncertain constitution. Even, therefore, if the financial proposals of the Young Plan can be changed to our satisfaction, there still remains the question of evacuation which was the chief reason for their being proposed. Our victory on the financial clauses would hardly by itself expedite evacuation; and yet without that the chief work of The Hague Conference would be left undone.

Happily, Belgium seems hardly less anxious than we are to end the occupation, and our duty is likely on that account to become easier. There is no reason why we should delay our evacuation until France is ready, for the presence of our army on the Rhine detracts from rather than strengthens our diplomatic position. Rather would its withdrawal increase the force of the two main principles for which we stand, alike on reparations and on the conditions of future peace. On reparations we stand for the principle that the whole idea of attempting to get money out of the last war is vicious and revolting. Our reparationists are like the swarm of bees in the carcass of the lion, and we shall be more than content if the whole account, so far as we are concerned, between ourselves and our late Allies can be made exactly even. As for the occupation, its continuance is flatly inconsistent with the Locarno spirit and the Kellogg Pact of Peace. Whether others do their duty or not, we must do ours, and that without delay.

THE CRISIS IN THE COTTON TRADE

BY S. S. HAMMERSLEY

DURING the last two weeks the popular Press has published many articles attempting to explain to the public exactly what is the matter with the Lancashire cotton trade. It would be an exaggeration to say that in the result the public have been informed. Within the limits of an article which any individual not connected with the trade would attempt to read, it is impossible to deal with the causes which have led to the continuous decline of England's greatest export industry, or to set out the changes which must be made if a great part of the Lancashire cotton trade is not permanently to be captured by competing nations.

It is much more practical to shirk the analysis than to mislead by over-simplification. Therefore

without preliminaries I come bluntly to the remedy. The Lancashire cotton trade requires thorough reorganization. The existing watertight sectionalization of the industry must be done away with. The Lancashire cotton trade, like every other producing organization, requires economies of mass production combined with the provision of a link between the producer and the consumer. Vertical combinations between large amalgamations within the various sections is the only plan that will give these two essentials. It is a mistake to imagine that any intelligent person in Lancashire is unaware of the facts and of the remedy. The difficulty is to apply the remedy.

The spinners and weavers (these latter are known as manufacturers) are the two chief producing sections. The bleachers, dyers, printers, finishers and packers all work to the orders of merchants or shippers; they do not own the material they treat. The merchants and shippers are responsible for the sale of the cloth produced. Spinners and manufacturers consist of hundreds of small isolated companies. Bleachers, dyers, printers, finishers and packers are organized into combines. In recent years merchants and shippers have concentrated into smaller numbers and larger units.

No effective link between the various sections can be created until the spinners and manufacturers are organized to work together as large units. It follows that the remedy for the present state of affairs cannot be applied until the spinners and weavers are organized into large-scale amalgamations. The first practical consideration, then, is to find out why it is that amalgamations in the spinning and manufacturing sections of the industry are so difficult.

At least half the spinning mills and weaving sheds in Lancashire are in the hands of their creditors. Of these creditors the banks are far and away the greatest in magnitude. The banks pay lip service to the idea of large-scale amalgamations, but in practice they do very little to further the aims they advocate. They have agreed to support the Lancashire Cotton Corporation; and so, unfortunately, it comes about that ideas of amalgamation are associated in the minds of those interested in the cotton trade with the proposals of the Lancashire Cotton Corporation. The proposals of this Corporation involve the calling up of at least £10 millions of uncalled capital in order to lighten the indebtedness of the creditors, especially of the banks.

No company will join the Lancashire Cotton Corporation unless it is forced to do so by its creditors—in a word, unless it is bankrupt. The Lancashire Cotton Corporation may therefore be looked upon as an amalgamation of bankrupt concerns. All the best mills, all the best brains in the producing sections are engaged in endeavouring to steer clear of the Lancashire Cotton Corporation. Amalgamations, which one would expect to see looked upon with favour by the most successful mills in the industry, are, on the contrary, only considered by the least efficient. The reason is to be found in the fact that the banks give no concessions to help forward amalgamations except when there is no alternative. Hence all concessions are given to the Lancashire Cotton Corporation because no mill will contemplate the Lancashire Cotton Corporation scheme unless it is bankrupt.

It is extremely unfortunate that the late Government favoured the scheme of the Lancashire Cotton Corporation—a scheme which was drawn up without consultation with any authoritative individual in the cotton-spinning trade. In the result the road to amalgamation (which is in fact the road to salvation) represents to the solvent spinners and manufacturers the road to ruin. The best technical brains in the

industry, instead of fighting for amalgamations on the lines of the Lancashire Cotton Corporation, are fighting against them.

The way out is to provide some effectual assistance towards reconstruction. Some scheme of amalgamation should be introduced which will appeal to the most efficient as well as the least efficient part of the trade. When amalgamations are known to be necessary, it is clearly ridiculous to restrict opportunities for amalgamation to companies that have lost all their capital, and to lay down conditions which can only be agreed to if a company judges itself bankrupt. The necessary finance should be provided to bring into being an amalgamation of the better-class companies. A working agreement between the new amalgamation and the Lancashire Cotton Corporation would present no practical difficulties at a later stage.

Any new amalgamation should conform to the following conditions:

- (1) The capitalization should be on an economic basis.
- (2) The purchase consideration for companies to be absorbed should take into account their earning capacity.
- (3) It should not be a *sine qua non* that all the uncalled capital should be called up.
- (4) Any uncalled capital not required for amalgamation on an economic basis should be cancelled.

To effect an amalgamation on these lines the Government should be prepared to advance money on the security of a first mortgage debenture. The amount of the first mortgage debenture should be limited by two factors: (a) Interest on all money lent to be covered at least three times by the average annual gross earnings taken over the last five years. (b) No money to be lent in excess of 15s. per spindle. All creditors (either secured or unsecured) must accept in exchange for their debt a proportion of cash (not exceeding 10s. in the £) and the remaining proportion in a second line security—either income debentures or preference shares. The chief creditors are the banks. The loanholders will accept whatever the banks are willing to accept.

Shareholders in the companies absorbed should receive ordinary shares in the amalgamation in exchange for their shares. In the case of a company with a small profit-earning capacity, sufficient money will have to be called up to fulfil the limiting factors (a) and (b) detailed above. The remainder of the uncalled liability will be cancelled. On these lines the Government's lending will be fully secured both in respect to capital and interest. By this method (and in my view by this method alone) it will be possible to effect unification of the spinning trade in a comparatively short time. The unification of the manufacturer's section can proceed along the same lines at the same time.

Unless the spinning and manufacturing sections can be unified, the cotton trade of Lancashire cannot be brought into that state of efficiency necessary to enable the existing cotton workers to find continuous employment. Unless a scheme such as the one outlined here is adopted it will be years and years before the spinning section is unified.

The Government have it in their power to bring about these large-scale amalgamations in the spinning and manufacturing sections. With these amalgamations in being, arrangements can then be made with the merchants and shippers, with the bleachers and finishers. In a sentence, the cotton trade can be rationalized. The first and most essential step is to set up the machinery for a large-scale amalgamation, capable of embracing prosperous companies in the spinning and manufacturing trades. This is not the only step, but unless this step is taken no real progress can be made and the Lancashire cotton trade will drift from bad to worse.

I have purposely said nothing of the existing wages dispute. This dispute is confined to the producing sections: spinners and weavers. Producers can only live by the economies inherent in full-time production. Finishers can, and do, make a respectable profit when working less than 60 per cent. of the normal hours of employment. Most of Lancashire's production has to go through the "bottle neck" of the finishing sections. It is clear that a reduction of the costs of production is no less necessary in the finishing sections than in the producing sections. It should be borne in mind that during the last eight years the finishing sections have worked at a profit while the producing sections have made very heavy losses. The producers (financially weak though responsible for most of the employment in the industry) are, as I have endeavoured to show, quite incapable of bringing about the much needed reorganization about which we read so much. Not only can they not reorganize the whole industry, they cannot reorganize themselves. The banks hold the position of vantage and have used their position to put up a notice to all spinners. This notice reads as follows: "The way to reconstruction lies through the bankruptcy court." In the circumstances, to blame the spinners for not pursuing the objective of rationalization is just as though we were to hold up the unemployed to obloquy and shame because they do not attempt mass suicide.

The producers, realizing that they cannot influence the more prosperous section of the cotton industry, knowing that the way to the reorganization of their own section is barred by the refusal of the joint stock banks to make the necessary sacrifices, are thrust back on their own resources. The Federation of Master Cotton Spinners is out to make its section of the industry efficient, i.e., capable of producing cotton yarn at a price competitive with the cost of production of the foreigner. It cannot do this without a reduction in the wages cost. Wages were last fixed in 1922 when the cost of living index was 181. It is now 160. The leaders of the operative spinners know that a reduction in wages is inevitable. (The executive offered to negotiate on the amount of the reduction, but on referring the matter to the rank and file authority to negotiate was refused.) I believe the rank and file would cheerfully accept a reasonable wage reduction if they could be assured that the economies resulting from lower wages would be passed on to the consumer and thus ensure more trade for Lancashire.

The wages dispute will obviously have to be settled, and it is in everyone's interest to settle it sooner instead of later. Now that the Federation of Master Cotton Spinners has agreed to submit the dispute to arbitration, the door to a satisfactory settlement lies open. At the time of writing neither the terms of reference nor the precise form of arbitration has been settled. The former should be simple—is a wage reduction necessary and if so how much?—and the latter should present no difficulty.

There is a strong feeling among some of the employers against reopening the mills at the old rates of wages, but I imagine that on reflection wiser councils will prevail and once the arbitrators are appointed Lancashire will be back at work again. If this agreement to arbitrate establishes a precedent in the settlement of wages disputes in the cotton industry, an important forward step in industrial conciliation will have been taken. Strikes and lock-outs on wages should be relegated to the past.

It is a mistake to consider the wages dispute as the crux of the problem. The real difficulty lies in the necessity for a complete reorganization of the whole industry. The way to that reorganization lies through the amalgamation of solvent companies in

the producing sections of the trade. The necessary large-scale amalgamations among spinners and manufacturers will never take place voluntarily until the banks make adequate sacrifices. Until this is done there is little hope for the restoration of prosperity to Lancashire. Yet salvation—full and continuous employment in the cotton industry—is possible; indeed, given the necessary Government backing and a less parochial view among the banks its attainment is not difficult.

THE HAIG MONUMENT

By D. S. MacCOLL

"IT'S no every Man can be like his Bust," said the Scottish sculptor, when they told him that his bust was not like the man. If only Committees and Family Councils and Writers to the Press would accept that high transcendental doctrine, would admit that the Phenomenal in Jones or Robinson feebly struggles to catch up with the plastic Noumenon, how happy would the sculptor be in the Heaven of his Ideas! The Scottish sculptor, it is true, however noble in his attitude of independence, was belated, the adherent of an outworn respect for resemblance, for the superstition of representation, believing as he did that it was the duty of the sitter to be like his portrait. Put into the hands of a really up-to-date sculptor, Mr. Jones would be happy if any hint of his presence survived; his absence rather, the curve of his departure, would be the artist's theme, his wake upon the shuddering air. And it would be something like a gas-pipe.

But no such peace and freedom are the sculptor's who obtains the commission for a public monument, as Mr. Hardiman is the latest to discover. A cloud of witnesses, with photographs in their hands, deny any likeness of form or character to the Man, and when he has been through the mill, veterinary surgeons and riding masters take up the song against the Horse; that, too, must be a likeness; and the army tailor follows in the matter of straps and buttons. Nor is the revolt this time (for there is regularly a revolt against sculpture) against anything "advanced," as they call it, in Mr. Hardiman's model; it is denounced as retrograde. The sculptor has been a pupil of the School in Rome, and it is held that he has looked too well at antiquity, and particularly at the Colleone, so that his Haig is a Condottiere, and his horse a Great, otherwise a Cart Horse, such as carried knights in armour.

Now the army critic is so often in the wrong over monuments that it may be difficult for an artist and his friends to allow that for once he may be in the right. There is the terrible Artillery Memorial at Hyde Park Corner, where the Army insisted on having a howitzer carved in stone: there is the Guards Memorial in St. James's Park, where they insisted on a Guardsman for each regiment; and some of us can remember the nightmare projects that were sent in by fond commanders before a blessed and decent uniformity was insinuated for the tombstones of the Graves Commission. But if Mr. Hardiman is a sensible man he will recognize that this time the critics are sound in principle; that those who commission a portrait are not unreasonable in expecting a likeness; and if he is an original artist in the proper sense of that abused word he will also find that closely defined conditions make for inspiration. The massive is ruled out, whether in its completest shape, the voidless stone-carved Assyrian Bull convention, or the still bulky barrel-shapes of the War Horse and his rider: but the

designer for bronze can make his account even with the nervous spidery legs of the Arab charger and the slim khaki-covered horseman. History is an art, and that is the art he is called upon to practise.

It may be some consolation for Mr. Hardiman to reflect that even the Masters with whom he has been to school had their tribulations; that the story of equestrian statue-making is strewn with conflict and frustration; that hardly one of the great enterprises has come through. Donatello, it is true, at the first attempt in modern times, was triumphantly successful with a greater creation than anything before or after: but he was Donatello, with so high a curb of measure upon the passion and variety of his genius that whatever he set his hand to was perfectly done. Yet, even he was hindered; only one of his equestrian projects was carried out. Verrocchio came through, but risked his head in doing it; his Venetian employers were dismayed by his braggart bandit, and wanted a "safe" local man, Donatello's imitator, Vellano, to model their general. Leonardo's sketches survive, but the plaster model of his Sforza, the work of years, was shot to pieces by the French archers. Of Raphael's project not a drawing even remains. Nor of Michelangelo's. And here the parallel is amusingly close.

The widow of Henri II, Catherine de Medicis, approached the aged great man nervously but guardedly, begging for at least a design, but also "that you will endeavour with all diligence and assiduity, so far as your years permit, to carry out this noble work, so that we may see and recognize my lord as in life. . . ." The first sketch was evidently too inexact in detail. Not having a photo, she sent a drawing, and required that "the King's head must be without curls, and the modern rich style of armour and trappings must be employed"; not the Romanizing garb he had given to the figures of her kinsmen in the Medici Chapel. Michelangelo presumably complied; but his design was given to "the slow and melancholy hand" of Daniele da Volterra to model and cast. In the end it was done; but the effort threw its maker into deeper melancholy and a violent catarrh, so that he barely outlived the making. And now it was too late: Henri II went without his statue at Blois and only the horse was used, adapted by Biard for his Louis XIII in what is now the Place de la Concorde, from which it disappeared during the Revolution. We do not, therefore, know what Michelangelo, up against the call for a speaking likeness and the adoption of French fashions, made of his problem: but in essence it was Mr. Hardiman's.

There is another consideration which should make the task of life-likeness not a burden but a privilege for the English sculptor. Sculpture survives with difficulty among us, and there is no reason why it should, if it cannot swallow the photograph and outrange it. How few Busts, after all, are so living as the death-masks of which an astonishing array has been recently published! There is, surely, something touching in the faith of the military critics that the snapshot is not an ultimate, that there is some magic of permanent art to be got at, if only the artist be badgered enough. But whether or not sculpture, in any valid sense, will survive the exactions of the camera, one thing is pretty certain, namely, that the Haig monument will be the last equestrian statue put up among us of a war Commander-in-Chief. Our leaders in the late war were cavalry men; what the leader in the future will be it is hard to say; perhaps a man in the conning-tower of a tank, or the cabin of a plane, or a chemist at his desk. All the more reason for making this end of a history as veridic as may be, though we may be sure that Haig himself, if he could watch the storm about his image, injured as he was to the rubs of committees and cabinets, would modestly and magnanimously and unflinchingly do his best "to be like his Bust."

THE NATION AND DRINK

IV—A MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR

IT was remarked in the third article of this series that every part of the national policy towards drink ought to be related. This means, among other things, that revenue policy ought not to be allowed to defeat or discourage reform, either by such intolerable taxation of liquor as would promote evasion and the supply of bad liquor in the effort to keep selling prices within the average purchaser's means or by injudicious fiscal discrimination between various kinds of liquor.

Doubtless, with present demands on the Exchequer, the taxation of spirits cannot be reduced; and it must be acknowledged that, though tens of thousands of consumers use spirits to their physical benefit, harmful excess is nearly always in spirits. But a State impost of 8s. 5½d. on every bottle of whisky sold at 12s. 6d. is heavy enough in all conscience. Any increase would have the appearance of plunder rather than that of taxation, and it would certainly defeat both the revenue and the moral purpose of it. The lowering of the taxation of beer is desirable, for beer is the usual drink of the poorest classes, and it is a harmless if ordinarily an uninspiring beverage; but that must wait on an improved national financial position. It is with wine that, at this stage, most could be done by the State.

Mr. Gladstone's argument of seventy years ago still has all its original force. Sound, unfortified wine is the healthiest of all things potable; it is the accompaniment of food, and no temptation to swilling at odd hours; and as it causes no reaction, unless taken in absurd excess, it does not lead up to "the hair of the dog" habit. The encouragement of wine drinking, then, where spirit drinking prevails is a very important part of any sensible temperance policy. But what is at present done to that end by the State?

To guarantee the authenticity of wine, other than Port, nothing; with the result that all manner of spurious wines abound, harming those who persist in drinking them, and so disgusting others that wine drinking makes no progress, and spirits continue to be favoured by all who are not devoted to beer. But nothing could be easier than for the State, which draws so much revenue from wine, to secure guarantees in the interest of national health. In France particularly, but in every continental viticultural country, the best wine-producing areas have been officially defined. Acting on this, Belgium has an agreement with France whereby only some two hundred named French wines, their territorial authenticity guaranteed by France, can be imported into Belgium. Germany also requires from France strict adherence to the *appellations d'origine*. To such demands France naturally makes ready response, as would Germany or any other country with a reputation for wine, for nothing injures the continental growers and shippers so much as the discrediting of their fine wines by vile concoctions and substitutes.

A State taking money out of the wine consumer's pocket is morally bound to see that he is not semi-poisoned, or even merely cheated, by the wine. Let Great Britain negotiate agreements with France, Germany, Italy, in each case, under expert advice, specifying the wines which may be imported, and there will be an end of this scandal. On one condition, however. The specifications must not be vaguely territorial; they must be precise, and must require not merely that the wine was made in the area from which it takes its name but from the characteristic grape of that area. Côte d'Or Burgundy, for instance, is not only wine of that region; it is, or should be, wine made there from the black Pinot grape, and no other. The Belgians, the best judges

of Burgundy outside Burgundy itself, see to it that their Burgundy, whether from the Côte d'Or or elsewhere, shall be genuine: we need an enlightened Ministry of the Interior quite as much as the Belgians do, and indeed more, for our people are much more easily deceived.

Authenticity being secured, it would remain to discriminate in taxation between wines. Clearly, the light natural wines ought to be taxed as lightly as possible. Their increased use, when genuineness was guaranteed and price lowered, would probably compensate the Exchequer for lighter taxation. But if there were any small deficit, it might be met by a reform desirable in itself: the enhanced taxation of all liqueurs, all of which are sheer luxuries and some of which are harmful, and of all sparkling wines other than Champagne. With the exception of Champagne, which has very valuable medicinal properties, the sparkling wines are either perversions of sound naturally still wines or hideous fakes disguised by "that delicious muscatel flavour" (especially when coming from too far north for any genuine muscatel grapes to be locally grown). If vulgar people like to drink such wines, they may well be made to pay extra for them. The resultant increase in the price of these wines, whether "made by the same process as Champagne" or merely aerated like "minerals," would probably not diminish revenue, for those who like gold foil and a popping cork and foam would like them still more when they cost as much as Krug or Pommery.

Empire wines must, no doubt, for political reasons have fiscal preference, but it might well be made conditional on abandonment of the pretence that they are Burgundies or Hocks. Wine made in Great Britain, from imported must or inferior imported grapes, should not be taxed: it should be absolutely prohibited, on the lines of Tudor legislation against destroying the King's subjects.

With all this should go a policy of very low licence fees for establishments vending nothing but wine for consumption on the premises. The restaurant and hotel obstacle to the encouragement of wine drinking would still be there, and it would be serious, for these establishments usually price their wines to yield from 100 per cent. to 200 per cent. profit. But there is a way of dealing with such profiteers. Restaurant and hotel licences, at favourable rates and with certain privileges regarding hours, can be made dependent on the income from wine not exceeding a certain moderate percentage of total income. The profiteer would then have to choose between lowering wine prices and being regarded as a mere drink seller and placed in a lower category. Then public-houses with a full licence should be required to stock some reasonable quantity of some few of the officially recognized wines. Those which replied that there was no demand for wine should be informed that in that case there was clearly no need for them to have wine licences, and should be deprived of them.

The stomachs of the people are even more a subject for State attention than their brains, if only because it is certain that every citizen has a stomach; and a genuine Ministry of the Interior, besides acting on the suggestions offered earlier in this series of articles, would encourage temperance not by persecution but by helping to make authentic and moderately priced wines easily available. What the country needs is not local option, that muddle-headed and cowardly instalment of prohibition, or prohibition itself, or a State monopoly of drink with the citizen denied liberty to take his custom where he will, but a policy which takes account of facts and ignores faddists. Man always has drunk and always will drink: the choice is only between having him drink wholesomely or viciously.

X.

HOLIDAY HOMICIDE *

By H. C. HARWOOD

WHEN I re-read 'Trent's Last Case,' now sixteen years old, I am impressed by the richness of the content but repelled by the clumsiness of the execution. It is a slow-moving story, the erotic interest is exaggerated, and the impersonation on which so much turns nearly incredible; for Marlowe to deceive both butler and wife of Manderson, and in the latter case by the sound of a disguised voice alone, is too much for me, especially as I see no strong reason why Marlowe, having duped the butler, should have risked going to bed. But it is a witty, ingenious book, and contemporary authors have not improved on the game; they only play it faster.

The best detective stories of the past season are: Mr. Connington's 'Nemesis at Raynham Parva,' Mr. Berkeley's 'Poisoned Chocolates Case,' and Mr. Van Dine's 'Bishop Murder Case.' Mr. Connington is in excellent form. He provides a good motive for the murder, and the means by which it was effected are reasonably well hinted during the course of the enquiry and adequately explained in the last chapter. I doubt whether it would have paid Francia, as a matter of business, to spend so much time and money over securing one white slave. Still, you know what these business men are! In his excitement he may have neglected to observe how his overhead was mounting up.

That gay and friendly writer, Mr. Berkeley, introduces us to a crime of which seven plausible explanations are given, the seventh true. It takes a little from our enjoyment that obviously the last alone will be true, but both motive and opportunity are sound, and no one can complain that he has been cheated. Nothing can be more difficult than to discover who among many dispatched poisoned chocolates to a very unpopular gentleman. So the author has plenty of scope. But I see nothing illegitimate in that.

As a rule when I find that the murderer is a homicidal maniac I throw the book to the other side of the room. Mr. Van Dine disarms criticism because he plainly announces that guilt rests on a mad mathematician, and obligingly gives us four from whom to choose. There is the usual rich coating of irrelevant culture and a neat display of plans and whatnot. Also, Vance's Oxford accent steadily improves. But Mr. Van Dine must beware of his tendency to put volume above nicety in murder. A wiser man than I has already warned Americans against preferring quantitative to qualitative values. It is just into that mistake Mr. Van Dine is in danger of falling.

These are the pick of the bunch, but there are others that not even serious students of the craft

need despise. The murderer in 'Inspector Frost's Jigsaw' is virtually insane, and the style is elderly and rather sentimental. No doubt the Boy Scout movement is admirable—I seem to have read something about it in the papers of late—but a detective story is not the proper medium for its advertisement. One does not take up a chess problem to study chivalry from the White Knight. Praise is due, however, to Mr. Maynard Smith for the psychology of his less pleasant characters and for his treatment of times.

The airy cynicism and genial satire wherewith the Coles decorate 'Poison in the Garden Suburb' lend it a secondary value greater than the primary. The plot is sound enough, so far as motive and opportunity go, although that two important facts are concealed by two separate witnesses for insufficient reasons degrades the whole more than a little. Miss Bradlington could have found plenty of euphemisms for bowels, and Delahaye, however highly he esteemed his promise, more highly, it appears, than his life, could nevertheless have approached Dr. Midhurst for permission to be released from it instead of sitting tight in his cell. The impersonation is tolerable, but has little use beyond prolonging a mystery that logically has collapsed. It would have been better to have prolonged the interest by making Delahaye guilty after all.

Mr. Wade was slightly disappointing. It was required to kill an old gentleman who had a thoracic aneurism, and a smart blow on the right spot should be enough. The murderer disguises himself and proceeds (a) to jostle his victim in order "to distract attention from the actual attack," and then (b) a few minutes later, to discharge from a cross-bow a rubber-coated shot. Why was not the murder committed at stage (a)? Too risky? The victim was accompanied by the murderer's accomplice, who should have been clever enough to cover up his friend's tracks by false descriptions, etc. The shooting was far less safe, because the best archer may miss under poor light conditions, and was incapable of any innocent explanation. Any one of London's millions might have bumped into Sir Garth as he went down the Duke of York's Steps, but none save a murderer of malice aforethought would make him a target for cross-bow practice in the Mall. The alibi, however, is well faked.

If I put the first trial above the second, it is radically, however I may try to rationalize my objections, because I feel that the authors of the former have written with ingenuity and gusto, of the latter with ingenuity alone. The difference is that between exclaiming "What fun it is to be clever," and boasting "See! how clever I am." Mr. Connington would write detective stories if a castaway on a desert island, though his only means of publishing them was to send out the MSS. in bottles. The Coles, I suspect, would not; much more probably they would compose yet another variant of Socialism. And of course the greater the keenness the greater the severity. A good author is his own sternest critic.

Now I pass on to a couple of books that, miles above mere sensationalism, still fail to excite intelligent interest. 'The Davidson Case' is third rate. It does not mystify. Only a fool could have any doubts as to the contents of the wicker-work box or the meaning of the cousins' resemblance. And 'The Mysterious Partner' is third-rate, too: lumpish, incoherent, and studded with errors in history and law. Both authors, however, have got hold of good ideas. But Mr. Rhode relies too much on the personality of Dr. Priestley and Mr. Fielding on the atmosphere that he so skilfully conveys. Rather more is wanted.

* 'Trent's Last Case.' By E. C. Bentley. Knopf. 3s. 6d.

'Nemesis at Raynham Parva.' By J. J. Connington. Gollancz. 7s. 6d.

'The Poisoned Chocolates Case.' By Anthony Berkeley. Collins. 7s. 6d.

'The Bishop Murder Case.' By S. S. Van Dine. Cassell. 7s. 6d.

'Inspector Frost's Jigsaw.' By H. Maynard Smith. Benn. 7s. 6d.

'Poison in the Garden Suburb.' By G. D. H. and M. Cole. Collins. 7s. 6d.

'The Duke of York's Steps.' By Henry Wade. Constable. 7s. 6d.

'The Davidson Case.' By John Rhode. Bles. 7s. 6d.

'The Mysterious Partner.' By A. Fielding. Collins. 7s. 6d.

'The Best Detective Stories of the Year 1928.' Edited by Fr. R. Knox and H. Harrington. Faber and Faber. 7s. 6d.

'Murder and Mystery.' By Evelyn Johnson and Gretta Palmer. Richards and Toulmin. 7s. 6d.

'Footsteps.' By K. C. Strahan. Gollancz. 7s. 6d.

From novels we pass to short stories. A collection has been made by Father Knox and Mr. Harrington—both masters of the craft—but is too “magaziney.” The best things in the book are Father Knox’s introduction and Mrs. Christie’s ‘Tuesday Night Club,’ and some attempt has been made to fill out the book with obsolescent tales. Bernard Capes, dead too many years, is represented here. Father Knox is sounder when he admits that “the game is getting played out,” and he refers, as I think I did six months ago, to Capablanca’s demand for more pieces and a larger board. Possibly we are not yet driven to that.

Miss Johnson and Miss Palmer had quite a good idea when they decided to boil down to the bones thirty-one problems. Unhappily, the problems are not quite good enough. The sort of thing that acts rather as an emetic than a stimulant is ‘Finger Prints Can’t Lie.’ The murderer is a German spy who has to kill his wife—she knows too much—and then flee England, in August, 1914. With his elaborate forgery of his maid’s finger-marks I shall not quarrel. It is just possible that he did it, though her trial is impossible. He escapes from England to Germany: good. He infects himself with a horribly disfiguring disease: why? Unintelligent as the German secret service was reputed to be, a member of it might have found some simpler way of covering up his tracks than by contracting acromegaly. Amid a welter of improbabilities more annoying than surprising, it is a pleasure to note the clean logic of the ‘Double Dealer.’ The authors are not intellectually but morally deficient. They lack humility. Theirs is the deadly sin of pride. They cannot believe that the readers have minds as good as their own. Still, according to their lights, they play fair, and they present their material in quite an original way.

And, of course, there is ‘Footsteps.’ Many people have been gratified by it, and some go so far as to see in it a means of rejuvenating a sclerotic tradition. It is therefore my duty to mention it. No less is it my duty to protest that a meagre and unconvincing plot remains meagre and unconvincing, no matter how elaborate the superstructure of morbid psychology and blandishing sentiment. If I am wrong, I am wrong. No man can say fairer. But I would bet Wall Street against a broken trouser button that I am right. ‘Footsteps’ will not do.

Perhaps too high a standard may be set. Nobody rises early in the morning and, after shaving more carefully than usual, sets himself to read a detective novel. No, we sprawl with such stuff on beaches, doze with it in armchairs or divide our attention between it and the railway-carriage window. Probably we shall not even notice if Sir James—that eminent but slightly sinister physician—changes halfway through to Sir John. Yet I believe, irrationally it may be, that the thing is worth doing well. I believe that there is an æsthetic pleasure to be derived from first-class detective stories, comparable with that derived from first-class architecture. In short, I believe in Gaboriau, Connington and Crofts.

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It would be helpful if the wrapper in which the paper was sent could be returned, but this is not essential. All subscribers’ copies are posted to them from London on Friday morning.

POLISH INTERLUDE—IV

By J. B. PRIESTLEY

BECAUSE Warsaw is the capital, we had to spend more time there than in any other city, but it seemed to me the least interesting of the towns we visited. It looks like one of the poorer and dustier quarters of Paris. The people are bright enough, but there is still something forlorn, melancholy, about the place itself. It has not yet forgotten the long Russian occupation, and the streets look as if they still expected another Cossack charge or two. There are three palaces in or near Warsaw, and the Poles, who live, it must be remembered, in a country that has been ravaged time after time, are very proud of these palaces. The best of them, to my mind, is the toy palace of Lazienki, an eighteenth-century affair that would make an ideal setting for one of our clever Strachey-ish historical novels. The other two seemed to me rather dull, but it is possible that I am being unfair. I saw them under unusual conditions. The little man was with us.

This little man—he really was quite tiny, with a piercing voice—was our guide at Warsaw, and I have never known anybody so relentless. It was his business to show us those three palaces, not merely the buildings themselves but everything inside them, and he meant to do it properly or perish. The hotter the afternoon, the more he harried us. He was like a small but ruthless dog with a herd of uncommonly large sheep. Through room after room, he hurried us, sometimes running round in circles and barking. Hurling Anglo-Saxons, mopping their faces, would sneak away and sit down, but in a minute or two he would find them out and compel them, by sheer will-power, to examine the hat of King John Sobieski or one of the innumerable bad portraits of King Stanislas August. I know now what it is to be really dominated. When his back was turned and I could merely hear his voice going on and on—“Thees ees the library of the Keenk”—I thought how easy it would be to end this tyranny once and for all by one good stroke; but the moment I met his searching gaze, I hurried forward, footsore and exhausted as I was, and looked with feigned admiration at yet another hat or portrait. If Poland ever feels that it is time the League of Nations really attended to her, she has only to send that little man to Geneva and the trick is done. He said he would call upon me when next in London, and I lie awake at night shuddering at the thought of what will happen when he does. There is so much to see in London, and he will want to see it all.

As everybody knows, Bernard Shaw’s new play was first produced in the very fine Polish Theatre in Warsaw, and we were given the privilege of seeing it when we were there. As a matter of fact, we only saw two acts, having missed the first, and I am sorry to say that some of our party, as I remarked before, quietly went to sleep in their boxes. (I attribute this to the fact that, for once, the little man was not with us.) The theatre itself is very comfortable, very handsome, and contrives to look more intelligent than any theatre in London. I sat next to the

very able director one night at dinner, and we talked to one another, in bad French, about 'Journey's End,' which he hopes very soon to produce. It will be very intelligently produced, you may depend upon that. Even I, who do not know any Polish except the words for "please," "thank you," "beer" and "tea" (and I heard three of them in the play), could see that 'The Apple Cart' was being very well done. Unfortunately, of all the plays that were ever written, this is the worst to see in a foreign theatre, because it has no action at all except a little skirmish between the king and his lady friend at the end of the second act. Nevertheless, I feel I know all about that play (after all, I have seen and read Bernard Shaw before), and when it comes to London I shall go and look very knowing about it. The Polish audience was very attentive and applauded each curtain, but it only laughed four times through the two acts. Evidently the Continent thinks Shaw no laughing matter.

The best thing in Warsaw is the Market Place in the old town. Three of us wandered into it, and could hardly believe our eyes. It is surrounded by tall, curly old buildings, and they are all coloured, pink, pale blue, green, and so forth. You feel as if you have strolled into a Russian Ballet "set," and at any moment, it seems, gay troupes will come bounding out of the dark doorways. After we had wondered and admired for a few minutes, the Polish journalist who made one of the three, declared that one of the ancient wine-shops in this market-place could sell us some old mead, so B.B.C. and myself, feeling like Hengist and Horsa, told him to lead the way, for we were the men for old mead. We walked across the antique cobbled square, dived into a very dark little doorway, passed under an ancient model of ship, and found ourselves at last in a panelled back room that made us feel at home at once, for it was the twin of many a bar that Fleet Street knows. There we ordered and drank a bottle of mead some five and seventy years old, as strong as a Viking. It was the experience I enjoyed, not the drink, which had far too much of the bee about it. We had hardly settled down, however, before all the others drifted in, and with them the little guide, whose flashing eyes we could not meet—for had we not just dodged the Cathedral? I am glad we just stumbled upon this enchanting market-place, and were not guided to it. When in Warsaw, go straight to the old market-place.

A new acquaintance suggested that four of us might like to visit a very quaint old town on the Vistula, about a hundred miles away, and put a fast car and a demon chauffeur at our disposal. This was one of the best days I spent in Poland. We travelled through about two hundred and fifty miles of the countryside. And the countryside begins as soon as the town ends; there is no suburban shading off from one to the other. Ten miles outside Warsaw, you might be anywhere. The roads in Poland are straight but very dusty and bumpy. There is hardly any motor-traffic on them at all; sometimes we went forty or fifty miles without passing another car. I shall probably annoy my Polish friends (who are all terrifically industrial and up to date, and would fill their country with traction-engines and lorries if they

could) if I add that all this remoteness is part of the charm of the place. You do not pass cars but you do pass innumerable peasant carts, curiously long affairs, on which whole big families, brown-faced, bare-footed, and as brightly coloured as a pantomime-chorus, will be riding. We stopped at one tiny town where an open market was being held. The shawls were as gay and picturesque as ever, but what marked this place was its passion for blue caps. All the men there wore these blue caps, and I noticed piles of them on the stalls. A crowd collected round the car when we stopped, and it remained there, curious but polite and grave, as long as we did. In complete silence, these people watched us put on our heavy coats again and settle in our seats. But then, the moment we moved off, they all burst into a roar of laughter; and for all I know these mysterious blue-capped ones may be laughing yet at the idiotic thought of us.

At our destination, the little old town on the Vistula, we sat on a small balcony, tried to enjoy sour milk with potatoes, and listened to a small but excellent band that was passionately eager to play anything we wanted. We returned, a hooting cloud of dust, through a twilight plain that seemed to go on for ever. And I assure my Polish friends that no day I spent in their fascinating country did more to give me an affectionate concern for the people and the place. The portraits of King Stanislas August can rot for all I care; but the happiness of those brown-faced people in the long carts, those people with the blue caps and the bright shawls, is another and graver matter, and I shall always wish them well.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

¶ The Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW welcomes the free expression in these columns of genuine opinion on matters of public interest, though he disclaims responsibility alike for the opinions themselves and the manner of their expression.

¶ Letters on topical subjects, intended for publication the same week, should reach him on Tuesday.

LIQUIDATED GERMAN PROPERTY

SIR,—The question of our disposal of the surplus proceeds of the private property of German nationals has been much canvassed of late, especially since the appearance of Sir Robert Donald's letter in *The Times* commenting adversely upon our retention of this surplus, which he regarded as wholly unwarranted.

I have recently discussed the matter with leading representatives of the banking and commercial circles of Bradford, who were unanimously of opinion that any surplus, after our own people's claims had been met, should be handed over to the German owners. It was freely admitted that Bradford had fared better—much better—in respect of debts owing by individual Germans than in the case of the subjects of any of our late allies. As one prominent Bradfordian expressed it, "When it comes to the question of enemies and allies together—give me the Germans every time." Similar views are also held in Lancashire, for the *Manchester Guardian* recently declared that "The sooner all remaining ex-enemy property is released the better, not only for its rightful owners but also for our own honour and credit."

It may perhaps come as a surprise to many of your readers to learn that Great Britain, with her dependencies, is alone among the Allies in retaining the surplus proceeds of German private property after her people's private claims against German nationals had been satisfied. As accounts stand at present, we shall have in hand, when the few claims remaining to be settled are disposed of, a sum of between £10,000,000 and £14,000,000, which, by all the recognized principles of International law, rightly belongs to the owners of the liquidated property.

That we should withhold this surplus, and fail to discharge what all other nations regard as an honourable obligation, is declared by the Young Committee to be indefensible and an obstacle to the restoration of international good will and normal conditions. They unhesitatingly recommend that the liquidation of German private property should immediately cease, and that any such property not yet liquidated should be returned to its owners.

It is to be hoped that Mr. Philip Snowden will find time, in the midst of his preoccupations with the larger questions of reparations, to discuss this matter with Dr. Stresemann, and that a settlement will be arrived at which will remove the stigma that has been created by what Germans regard as our lack of good will and good faith. It is not a sufficient answer to the charge of *males fides* on our part to quote the clauses in the Peace Treaty whereby the onus of compensating her nationals was placed on Germany, because we know that actually she was not in a position to recoup her owners of private property expropriated by the Allies beyond about 10 per cent. of their losses. Moreover, as has been well pointed out, one party robbing another is not exculpated merely by enjoining a third to compensate him, especially when that third is unable to do so. Certainly, it was never intended, nor did we as a nation ever contemplate making a profit out of the liquidation of private German property, for, since international law has been established such property, while naturally subject to restraint of usage during war, has always been held to be returnable at the conclusion of hostilities, together, as Lord Finlay declares, "with any fruits which it may have borne in the meantime."

Other eminent jurists whose *dicta* might be cited in support of Lord Finlay are Lord Parmoor, Lord Birkenhead and Viscount Haldane. The general condemnation with which our policy towards enemy private property is regarded is exemplified in the following extract from an article by Professor Edwin Borchard, of Yale University, in the *American Journal of International Law*, 1924, Vol. 18:

It is believed that few provisions of the treaties of peace are more ominous for the future than this measure for the confiscation of privately owned property within the jurisdiction. In a day when international business depends upon the mobility of capital as never before, foreign investment and property, which for over a century has been protected by law, must now depend for their security, as in ancient times, upon the preponderance of force. The effect of the revolutionary doctrine adopted at Versailles has not yet been fully realized by the trade and banking community; but it seems quite obvious that there can be no serious reduction in armaments in any independent country so long as this subversive doctrine prevails in international affairs. It is a cancer in the system.

Thus, according to all the best authorities our attitude is unjustified in law, and certainly it is not conducive to the restoration of those pre-war trade relations which we and our former continental business friends found to be so mutually advantageous.

I am, etc.,

A. E. RITCHIE

19 Holker Street,
Keighley

CHINA

SIR,—I think Captain Knapp is unduly pessimistic as to the future of Shanghai and the consequences arising in the case of extra-territoriality being abolished. According to Saturday's papers, all the Powers will have by now presented notes to China, expressing their sympathy with Chinese wishes, but maintaining that the time is not yet ripe for such a step. I am quite sure that both Great Britain and all other countries having interests in China are sincere in their willingness to meet the Chinese in the question of the abolition of extra-territoriality, and that, sooner or later, it will become a fact, without the position of Europeans in China becoming insupportable.

As to the possibility of some other Power taking England's place in Shanghai with the help of a large army, none would be so foolish to adopt such a course, for it would create such an outcry among the Chinese, both in China and wherever there are Chinese, and do that country incalculable harm through loss of trade caused by the intensive boycotts that would immediately follow, that the industrialists of that country would be the first to demand of their Government the withdrawal of its troops from China. Any Power attempting to step in the shoes of the one withdrawing extra-territorial rights, etc., in China would alienate the feelings not only of the Chinese, but also those of the rest of the world.

Shanghai is already quite international, and the present position of affairs is, on the whole, satisfactory, though, unfortunately, not satisfactory enough from the Chinese point of view. I might mention that I have lived in China a good many years as a British merchant, and like the Chinese very much, especially the old type of Chinese.

I am, etc.,

WALTER BUCHLER

261 Goldhurst Terrace, N.W.6

THE PRICE OF JOURNALISM

SIR,—In challenging a statement of yours—with which statement I heartily agree—"A Solicitor" declares that his remuneration as a writer has been at the rate of £4 4s. a column. He is lucky. For twenty years (1895-1915) I was a free-lance journalist and I was never paid at a higher rate than 30s. a column (daily paper column). Usually I got £2 2s. a page, but I have written for as little as 7s. 6d. a page and that in a high-class publication.

I reached the conclusion that contributing to papers is useless except for the man who is paid for the use of his name irrespective of the merits of his work. Any routine work, however irksome, is better.

I am, etc.,

ARCHIBALD GIBBS

WESTMINSTER ABBEY

SIR,—You have rightly raised the question whether the Abbey is a great historical and artistic monument or merely a functioning, glorified church.

It is impossible to blame clergy attached to that institution for wishing to provide themselves with the accommodation which would enable them to carry out their duties conversantly. If Westminster Abbey were anything less than it is, there would be difficulty in finding an answer to the Dean's argument. But Westminster, as you point out, is a very great national monument.

Being that, it cannot, or should not, be exposed to the well-meaning vagaries of temporary Deans. The nation does not think with them. Perhaps, as I gather you imply, it should regard the Abbey simply as, in

the usual sense, a centre of operative official religion. But the fact is, that it does not. Nor is it irreligious in its view. There is a piety deeper than that of the conventionally religious, and a reverent regard for Westminster Abbey, our inheritance, may possibly be more religious than anxiety to provide for slick service.

In any event, why does the Dean adopt so lofty an attitude? He is hardly justified by the chief authority he quotes; for the Fine Arts Commission was not invited to judge whether the new sacristy should be appended to the Abbey but only to decide which of two sites would be less objectionable.

Should the Dean persist, he will be producing an argument for the establishment of trustees, lay as well as clerical, in respect of all historical abbeys—not establishing the right of Deans and Chapters to do as they choose with sacred edifices.

I am, etc.,
"W."

THE THEATRE LOOKING BACKWARD

BY IVOR BROWN

THE August lull gives the theatrical paragraphist a chance to look forward and fill a column with October's news; the critic meanwhile has opportunity to look backward and reflect upon his recollections of the year's yield. There are losses to report. Leslie Faber is dead in his prime, a master of style in a theatre which sorely needs the presence and the authority which he gave to all his parts. There was a touch of the Roman about him, in look and gravity; I know not whether he ever played Brutus, but I know that he would have been superb in that kind. Yet this gravity was not Roman only; it had in it the whole quickening power of Attic salt. In his last rôle (as the nobleman with a load of mischief in 'By Candlelight') he was perfect in poised foolery and well-bred relish of intrigue. He had both power and grace and the parts to which success in London assigns a conqueror do not often demand either. In a more ambitious theatre than that of our capital he would have proved a greater player than we knew; to crook plays and routine drama he could bring his efficiency, suave or steely as occasion needed, but there was infinitely more in him than a ready capability. His taste reached far beyond green-room limits. He cared, for instance, for style in all the arts and had, what few actors possess, a palate for good writing. His first management brought him the longest run of the year in a good piece which his art made better, and his sudden passing makes one remember the terrible chant of lamentation in 'Porgy':

Death ain't yuh gots no shame?

We start the autumn season under tragic handicap.

But we start it also with the reflection that a forgotten mode has come into its own. Light opera is restored to life. Gilbert and Sullivan had so vitalized this mode that they seemed to kill it. After so gay a life it needed, at any rate, a long sleep. Subsequent efforts were liable to be set against the Savoyard standard; comparison was usually murderous. The decline of the great partnership coincided accordingly with the rise of musical comedy. Musical comedy thrived on its lack of ambition. Aiming at little it could not be criticized. It was lavishly paragraphed and patted on the back. Scolding, if it came, did no harm, because the musical-comedy public does not read. A medley of amours and antics replaced satiric song and the

whole tradition of social criticism by way of *operette* languished and lapsed; revue took over the residue of the estate and frequently exploited it well. But when revue went so much out of favour that London could only support one or two at a time it seemed that the mixture of music and mischief which should be an essential part of entertainment in a civilized capital was bound to wither.

At Hammersmith, ballad opera survived as a popular antique. The history of the Lyric, up to this year, has not encouraged Sir Nigel Playfair to throw aside the pannier and periwigs that have been the uniform of success. Classics and moderns alike, Shakespeare, Molière and Pirandello have failed to hold the devotees of 'The Beggar's Opera.' The balladry of the eighteenth century, discreetly titivated, continued to be the effective bait of showmanship; the modern producer, in short, found that he could do better without the modern author. But the success of the topical revue, 'Riverside Nights,' followed by the long run of 'La Vie Parisienne,' argue that contemporary wit can at last hold its own with the lyrical lampooning of the Age of Reason. Mr. A. P. Herbert and Mr. A. Davies-Adams owe nothing to Offenbach but the airs; the touch and temper of their engaging libretto (Benn, 3s. 6d.) are all their own—and all our own, too, in the sense that they typify modern mockery of Victorian solemnity. At the same time Mr. Coward has turned from revue to *operette* and his weekly schedule of box-office returns must make very pleasant breakfast reading.

In both cases the authors look backward for their laughter; Mr. Coward's mischievous survey of Victorian naughtiness is delicious; it is a necessary relief to his simultaneous effort to restore the romantic side of the business in top-notes and top-boots. We may yawn a little at the spectacle of Mr. Coward laying posies on the doorstep of crinolined sincerity and saluting the high intentions of lovers in Hessians; he does it gravely but without conviction, whereas, when he is laughing at the racy ladies of the period, he is at his very best. Mr. Herbert, on the other hand, makes scarcely the shadow of a bow to the sentimental side of the convention. That he could do it, if he chose, is proved by the charming song:

When I was young, I laughed at Love,
My careless heart no maid could move.
But now to Love I bend the knee
And Love, remembering, laughs at me.

Far the greater part of his very gay piece, however, is the burlesque of plaided piety and of the pork-pie hat that was really the cap of a prisoner's uniform. But it is worth noting that much of his satire is as true of England under Lord Brentford as it was of England under Lord Palmerston. The trimmings alter; the tyrannous humbug that Mr. Herbert hates remains the same and as a verbal tyrannicide he has the most destructive bedside manner.

We must take our revival of light opera as it comes and with thanks. Evidently it is agreed that fancy dress must be compulsory; the most modern manners may be scolded, but only under disguise of whiskers and crinoline. Light opera will not have completely returned to its own until it is allowed to wear its own clothes. For the compulsion to look backward is a severe limitation, particularly as we have for some strange reason agreed that only the nineteenth century can be laughed at. The eighteenth is "for to admire." We prink it and powder it and set it out upon a painted stage; its successor we punch and pummel and prod. We make obeisance to periwig, and are set on a roar by a pair of whiskers. Three times this year—at 'Fashion,' 'La Vie Parisienne' and 'Bittersweet'—I have been invited to regard the polka-period as the most preposterous of humanity's adventures. Nobody ever screams at

the minuet for being boring, while everybody screams at the polka for being brisk. If light opera is to renew itself, as I hope it will, it must escape this monotony of mockery and hold up its gently malicious mirror to receive the fashion of our own time. I suspect that the weight of managerial opinion will be against this move. Hammersmith has flourished on period pieces offered with a spice of fantastical burlesque, and it is a natural conservatism which rejects the tailoring of our time on the ground that it would be a disastrous blow to the predilections of the regular Hammersmith patrons for whom the present tense is held to be insupportable. But the chortling over tightly trousered and loosely hirsute gentlemen going hoppity-hoppity under the chandelier must wear itself out. And then light opera, introduced, I hope, by Mr. Coward and Mr. Herbert, can step forward into its proper place and be the muse of the moment. It has a right to that place by tradition and by temper. For its lightness should be of a delicacy in wit and melody which the "talkies" and the "singles" are unlikely to rival. The mechanical drama (which is at least half the output of the West End) let mechanism take over. That only leaves more room for the show which conquers by its immediacy and spontaneity, to which class a clever *opérette* assuredly belongs.

BROADCASTING

NOT long ago a magnificent and windy rumour caused a flutter among the doves of Kensington Gardens and Regent's Park. It was reported, on the highest academical authority, that Music had ceased to be the "Cinderella of the Arts." Now there are three outstanding facts in Cinderella's life that call for special mention. First, she arrived late at the ball. As for that, the academicians are still busy trying to settle whether we sang before we scratched things on walls, but the evidence seems to prove that music was fairly early there, so we may grant Music co-eternity with her peers. Secondly, that when she did get to the ball she outshone all the other guests in the wealth of her attire and the warmth of her reception. Well, as regards London, Sir Thomas Beecham (to whose opera scheme all health and strength) is helping Music to get to the doors, at least, of the ball-room, and although there seems to be some difficulty in getting the lymphatic lady up the grand staircase, she will, I hope, find a real welcome when she does reach the top. In this case, then, Music seems to be likely to fit the part of Cinderella, but the pleasantest part only. There remains the third fact in the little girl's life: the slut's work she was called on to do by her wicked sisters. And here, I am afraid, the case fits peculiarly closely. It is only necessary to glance at the wireless programmes during the holiday season to realize how, all those persons who generally give "talks" being away, Music is called on rather mercilessly to fill the spaces left empty. And so the Great Rumour is shown to have no foundation. Music still does the work of a faithful servant. And how well!

The Proms. are an unfailing means of subsistence, and what the Corporation has done in saving them from destruction at a critical time in their career, and in putting them within the reach of an extra-London audience, is beyond the ordinary methods of commendation. But they are outside the usual run of broadcast music. This latter has been exemplified lately by a great deal of "light music," some of it rather poor, all of it mixed up together in a gay, care-free manner in keeping with the holiday spirit but tiring to pursue.

Programme-making of a reasonable sort is evidently at a discount for the moment. Monday gave us a thoroughly good chamber concert with the Kutcher string quartet playing Haydn and Dvorák extremely ably, and Miss Irene de Wolodimeroff, a new young Russian soprano, singing de Falla, Bartók, Ravel and Iliashenko pleasantly and with a compelling energy. This concert was something to be thankful for.

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The Sunday examples of English Eloquence have not deteriorated, as it was feared they would, with their approach to modern times, and the latest sample was as stirring as any. Woodrow Wilson's Armistice speech before Congress must have surprised and moved listeners hitherto unacquainted with its magnificent periods and the unflinching truth they clothe. "We must hold the light steady"—such a phrase sounds incredibly portentous now. The broadcast of this speech will have caused some heart-searching among those who hear it now and who looked ten years ago to a speedy rehabilitation of Europe. In bringing such matter to our notice the B.B.C. does a real service. A just audible hum of jazz from Paris gave a sardonic significance to Wilson's words.

*

A list follows of the coming week's more interesting items. Monday: Mr. Harry Firman on 'Peacocks, Pots and Pants' (2LO), Mr. D. Rhys Phillips on 'Celtic Dress' (Cardiff). Tuesday: Mr. S. E. Allan on 'The Race for the Schneider Cup' (Bournemouth), Mr. W. Forbes Gray on Haddington (Scotland). Wednesday: Sir Edward Denison Ross on 'The Near East To-day' (2LO). Thursday: Col. G. D. Turner on 'The Criminal's World' (2LO), Mrs. Eric Sharpe on 'Winchester under the Tudors' (Bournemouth), Mr. Lynden Harris on 'Husbands and Wives in English Literature' (Cardiff), Miss Anne Lamplugh on 'The Housewife's Hedgerow Harvest' (North of England). Friday: Mr. A. B. B. Valentine on 'Thirty Miles From Charing Cross' (2LO).

CONDOR

LITERARY COMPETITIONS—181

SET BY IVOR BROWN

A. We offer a First Prize of Two Guineas and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for a poem beginning:

Oh to be in Deauville now that August's there!

B. We offer a First Prize of One Guinea and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for an Epitaph in verse or prose on a Good Thirst, which has been killed by kindness.

RULES

- i. All envelopes must be marked LITERARY, followed by the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and addressed to the Editor, The SATURDAY REVIEW, 9 King Street, London, W.C.2 (e.g., this week: LITERARY 181a, or LITERARY 181b).
- ii. Typescript is not essential, provided the writing is legible, but competitors must use one side of the paper only. Pen-names may be employed if desired.
- iii. Where a word limit is set, every fifty words must be marked off by competitors on their MSS.
- iv. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves to himself the right to print in part or in whole any matter sent in for competition, whether successful or not. MSS. cannot be returned. Competitors failing to comply with any of the rules will be disqualified. Should the entries submitted be adjudged undeserving of award the Editor reserves the right to withhold a prize or prizes.

Entries must reach the Editor, addressed according to the rules, not later than by the first post on Monday, August 26. The results will be announced in the issue of August 31.

RESULTS OF COMPETITIONS 179

SET BY L. P. HARTLEY

A. We offer a First Prize of Two Guineas and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for an attempt to estimate, in the manner of Marcel Proust, and if possible to illustrate by examples, the exact social position of Little Lord Fauntleroy. Entries should be in English and should not exceed 250 words in length.

B. We offer a First Prize of One Guinea and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for a poem, not more than 20 lines long, describing a heron disturbed at its fishing and flying away. The poem may be in blank verse or in any metre the competitor chooses.

REPORT FROM MR. HARTLEY

179A. The answers in this competition were disappointingly few. Perhaps 'Little Lord Fauntleroy' is too old, and 'A la Recherche du Temps Perdu' too new; or perhaps those who are familiar with the one have not read the other. I had hoped for some pleasing contrasts between Mrs. Hodgson Burnett's artlessness and Proust's sophistication. Little Lord Fauntleroy's treatment of his dog, for instance; how Proust would have elaborated this, how he would have analysed it, and discovered in the noble child's intrepid bearing a hundred points of difference from plebeian natures. However!—An anonymous competitor had a good idea when he put his observations on Lord Fauntleroy's social status into the mouth of M. de Charlus; and his comment on the blasting effect of the American element in Lord Fauntleroy's parentage was also a happy thought. But he makes M. de Charlus speak of the Guermantes as de Guermantes, a sad blunder in social usage. And this M. de Charlus has little in common with his prototype except insolence. Doris Elles introduced some similes which recall Proust's characteristic manner, and one or two touches amusing in themselves: "that his simple, loving manners did not exasperate every financier and diplomat in the country was proof of the power which his riches could win him in every department that he cared to enter." She gives the substance of what Proust might have said, but his spirit eludes her; she condenses too much. I feel that so distinguished a failure is a criticism of the problem itself; but I do not think it was insoluble. No prize is awarded.

179B. This competition produced many excellent poems. Nearly all showed acquaintance with the habits and appearance of the heron, but one attributed to it a rose-red leg and likened its deliberate flight to "a cloud as of smoke and a streak as of flame." I liked Helen's verses, but they were too artificial for the subject, which yielded the best results when treated simply. T. E. Casson's Wordsworthian poem had some good lines, but it hovered between parody and imitation with uncomfortable effect. Lavengro's portentous background obscured the bird:

—Silence like grief
For some departed pride majestic broods
O'er the sweet deadness of the wood as though
It were the once regretted heart that beat
Of old with that lone fisher's of the gloom. . . .

But the majority of the competitors showed skill in fitting the heron into its setting. All the foregoing deserve honourable mention, as do Philip Hodge and Charles G. Box. Choosing the winner was a difficult task. Halcyon's short lines do indeed break his rhythm, but not very happily. J. M. Oldfield does not always make his meaning clear; Pibwob's rhetorical question, "who knows how Nature warns her brood?" though reasonable, is not helpful or original, and his simile of the spring, as applied to the heron's neck, seems too strong. A rather flat last line is, to my

mind, the only defect in Seacape's poem, so he is awarded the first prize; while J. M. Oldfield, Halcyon and Pibwob all get second prizes.

FIRST PRIZE

Beside a clump of reeds at evening's close
A heron waited, mirrored in the lake,
Probing the shallows with his patient eyes.
And now and then the yellow beak would stab
At some unwary shape that swam below . . .
And wait . . . and stab again. And so he fished,
Without encroachment on his solitude;
Till, as he bent unwearingly down,
A thing of stone, some slight and alien sound
Broke on the wilderness. Whereat in fear,
With head uplift, he stood at gaze awhile.
Again the sound. Then turning for the shore,
With every muscle nerved to quick escape,
He loosed the spreading oarage of his wings
And flailed the air in wide impulsive beats,
Relaxing as he rose; till, croaking oft,
He settled to the tenour of his course,
And, now in leisurely and ordered flight,
Fast disappeared into the oncoming night.

SEACAPE

SECOND PRIZE (1)

The day has spilled its radiance, and washed
All colour, life and movement from the scene
That like a picture stands, with colours blurred.
The sky is like a bowl of yellow cream,
The hills are fawn, the sloping fields are gold—
All pale and wan—and where the hollow stream
Should glitter in an arch of green, and green
And silver flashes, with the swish of spear
And clash of sabre reed, and throbbing drum
Of bullrush head on ripple, all is still.
Pale is the river; pale and stiff and still
The marshalled line of reeds, dust-brown and dead.
And as flies caught in amber, so the place
Embalmed in yellow light and silence lies.
Crash of a gun! and splintered is the quiet
Like glass. And with a transverse line across,
The heron cuts the gold from stream to hills
With a torn line of fear. But then the calm
Closes behind his flight, covers its trace,
With liquid gold. And all again is still.

J. M. OLDFIELD

SECOND PRIZE (2)

Stillness and peace. Grey comfortable clouds,
Slow-moving, decently o'erlapping, lest bare sky
Should show between. Grey water; and to north
The tall masts taper, grey against the roofs.
Even the grass, browned by the straggling bents,
Seems warm grey, like the mole's soft, sober coat.
And in these silvers, greys, and fawns. He stands:
So grey a thing, no simile he needs—
Not lead, nor ash, nor steel can boast
So pure a grey, so steadfast and so true,
A colour like the eyes of honest men—
He stands; motionless, tense, alert,
Taut like an archer, e'er he loose his shaft.
Then, when you half believe him turned to stone,
Sudden, the great black-bordered wings unfold
And launch the heavy body into space;
Slowly it seems, labouring to bear it up,
Yet, e'er the eager eye is satisfied,
The grey bird's but a dark speck far to south,
And that grey harmony has lost its key.

HALCYON

SECOND PRIZE (3)

Motionless, patient, in the shallow creek
A lonely heron stood, his javelin-beak
Poised for unerring, fatal cast, his lean
And graceful neck curved like a spring between
The silver-grey, hunched shoulders; so the bird
Stood, carved in antique sculpture, till he heard
Or saw—who knows how Nature warns her brood?—
Some alien import in his solitude.
His neck uncurved, his head turned to and fro,
The yellow of his iris seemed to glow,
His sombre plume stirred; and, when unaware
The stranger moved, strong pinions threshed the air
With vigorous and, it seemed, ungainly beat,
That yet upcarried him in swift retreat
From violated sanctuary. And so
He flew, trailing his long-stretched legs below
Like pendent waggon-shafts, and from on high
Grated his stridulous, derisive cry.

PIBWOB

BACK NUMBERS—CXXXVIII

'**F**IRMILIAN, a Spasmodic Tragedy,' Aytoun's rather clever and not at all ill-natured parody, was the end of Alexander Smith's reputation as anything but an anthology poet. Earlier it had been expected by the Rev. George Gilfillan, that amiable and active accoucheur to the Muse, that Smith would turn out to be a sort of second Keats, to Dobell being reserved the privilege of showing the world "another Shelley, of a manlier and Christian type." But a very candid friend, Hugh Macdonald, had told him his poetry was "just a blatter of brow words and whirly-whas they call eemages." Macdonald was nearer the truth than Gilfillan. In a good deal, not all, of Smith's early work there is little but "brow words" and "eemages." 'A Life Drama' is full of both, and though in reading it again I have glimpsed some sort of story and aim, now, an hour afterwards, it is once more impossible to be sure for what purpose the words and images are there. And there is, even in the reading, much more in the recollection, a horrid doubt whether the words really are or only seem "brow" and the "eemages" evidence of imagination.

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Of a score of things, take this:

The sunset hung before us like a dream
That shakes a demon in his fiery lair.

It is effective in its way; but what does it communicate to us, what does it suggest? Blake, dealing with the chief of demons, in a poem of great simplicity tells the Devil he is

The son of morn in weary night's decline,
The lost traveller's dream under the hill.

and the last line strangely illuminates depth after depth of the abyss which Blake had entered but which to Smith was a striking part of the stage scenery. When one has thought upon the imagery of Smith, which won him most of his early fame, one begins to wonder if it may not be the worst part of him. It can be counted to his credit in the spirit in which Dr. Johnson said that though Churchill was a tree producing only crab apples, the tree producing many is better than that producing few. Smith really abounds in imagery, and, to be fair, at least one in five of his images is striking. But he seems in earlier days to have conceived of poetry as an art which refers everything to everything else.

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There is an element of truth in that; and if I had space I would quote here that subtle, flawed poem by Ebenezer Jones in which he exposes to us, as perhaps no one else has done in our poetry, the processes by which the poet's mind relates things apparently dissimilar. Or I would quote Baudelaire's poem on "correspondences," for doctrine, or that very famous thing of Gérard de Nerval's as an example. But between the imaginative discovery of "correspondences," or their, in the old sense witty, notation as in Donne, and Smith's early procedure there is a great difference. Most of the time, Smith was ingeniously, though often with a real excitement, inventing "correspondences" and affinities. The Tennysonian "raw Haste, half-sister to Delay," and Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch's naughty "orange blossom, twin-sister to to-morrow's marmalade" were nothing to Smith's worst achievements. There are times when he goes about asking everything in the world whether, by token of the strawberry mark on it, it is not related to everything else, and sees

the universe in a conspiracy of reciprocal imitation for the benefit of a poet with a knack of producing "eemages."

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A great deal of criticism consists of telling a writer to do otherwise than he can, and it is likely enough that Smith was not so unwise as he seems, for without his images he is apt to become flat. All the same, his three best things are not crowded with merely ornamental simile and metaphor. One of them, known to readers of anthologies as 'Barbara,' occurs in the late blank verse poem, 'Horton.' It has a rather curious echoing music, and might in that respect be compared with some of the second-best of Poe's verse; its sentiment is now and then not better than that of some pieces in Adam Lindsay Gordon. And yet how near it comes to fine achievement. Just a little more precision, just a little more distinction of style, and it would have matched his friend Sydney Dobell's quite beautiful and unjustly neglected 'Isabel.' 'A Life's Drama' contains the really felt and in parts finely phrased lyric beginning, "The fierce exulting worlds, the motes in rays." It has its "eemage"—

Across his midnight sea of mind,
A Thought comes streaming, like a blazing ship
Upon a mighty wind—

and it goes on too long; but the excitement of the first half of it is authentic. And then there is the very best of his lyrics, 'Glasgow,' which, as was remarked in some earlier 'Back Number,' is the only thing in our poetry at all like Christopher Smart's masterpiece. There is urgency there, and the haste with which beautiful natural things are brought together passionately is to the glory of Glasgow as in Smart to the glory of God.

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I would give a good deal to have someone else search out, for one does not leave the table in the midst of table talk to gather information at the British Museum, whether Smith had read Smart, whose day came later at the urging of Browning and Rossetti. But when we read in Smith:

O fair the lightly sprinkled waste
O'er which a laughing shower has raced!
O fair the April shoots!
O fair the woods on summer days,
While a blue hyacinthine haze
Is dreaming round the roots!

we are reading a poet who, without the strawberry mark, must be pronounced for that moment Smart's brother.

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Of Smith's prose, as represented by the essays entitled 'Dreamthorp,' for 'A Summer in Skye' I have never read, I hesitate to write because it must be twenty or more years since I looked into the volume. The recollection, for what it may be worth, is of a book giving one the sensation of contact with a pleasant personality and containing some graceful prose, but containing also too many pages done to average expectation. We all know what an essay is, until some new master comes along and upsets our ideas of it. If memory serves, Smith kept too carefully to the norm. Perhaps it was because he had for years read essays to some sort of literary society in Glasgow. The reading of essays is probably the worst preparation for writing them; for how should the average audience recognize an essay but by its likeness to all other essays? All the same, there is some poet's prose in 'Dreamthorp'; and Alexander Smith was in his way and degree a poet.

STET.

REVIEWS

TWO OMNIBUS VOLUMES

BY EDWARD SHANKS

The First and Last of Conrad. Benn. 7s. 6d.
A Modern Comedy. By John Galsworthy.
 Heinemann. 8s. 6d.

THE omnibus volume is one of the best things that modern publishing has given us, and we must therefore look with a kindly eye on even the most unexpected example. The first of these is, however, rather beyond a joke. It contains, in fact, within reasonable limits of definition, the first and the last of Conrad. What was really his first and really his last is by no means easy to establish, since it was his habit to begin books and then to put them on one side for ten years or more. The four here included are 'Almayer's Folly,' 'An Outcast of the Islands,' 'The Arrow of Gold,' and 'The Rover.' The first of these was certainly the first of his books to be published and equally certainly (I think) the first to be written. But, unless I am much mistaken, 'The Rescue,' begun much earlier, was finished after 'The Arrow of Gold,' and there is another book, 'Suspense,' never finished at all, which comes later than 'The Rover.'

To sum up—the four constituent parts of this volume have little connexion with one another save in the fact that the same publisher has rights over all of them. To put them within the same pair of covers is, I submit, to play the fool with the admirable idea of the omnibus volume. It makes quite a good book, but it stands in the way of better books. I should not hesitate to recommend it to anyone who did not already know Conrad (if any such there be) and who wanted a great deal in a small space to take away with him on a summer holiday. It contains more than a thousand pages of excellent reading, is easily portable, and is very cheap. But no one to whom seven-and-sixpence is a very important sum ought to buy it without first considering whether he might not afterwards want the whole of Conrad's works. If he does, this will not fit in with the rest. Nor can it be considered anything like the perfect introduction to Conrad. 'Almayer's Folly' and 'The Arrow of Gold' are in the very different ways among the best books he ever wrote. The other two, also in their very different ways, are among his less satisfactory productions. 'An Outcast of the Islands' was composed when his future as an author was a very indefinite business, but when it was necessary that he should endeavour to make some progress with it. 'The Rover' comes from his last days when age and his long struggle had left to him little but his virtuosity. A collection of the "long-short stories" would have served a real purpose and made a real book. This is not a book, it is an accident: if I could imagine what Conrad would have said about it, I should hesitate to print the precise wording.

It does, however, give me an opportunity of reiterating my admiration for 'The Arrow of Gold,' a book which, in my opinion, stands very high in the list of its author's works. It also was a book which he was long in writing, and he wrote bits of it elsewhere. In 'The Mirror of the Sea' he refers to the story which it tells as his initiation into "the life of passion." It was undoubtedly an episode, however freely treated, out of his own life. Doña Rita existed in the flesh: she recognizably occurs, though looked at through a quite different pair of eyes, in a novel by the French author, Pierre Benoit. And I have been told that Conrad, when asked why he had given his suave and subtle American soldier of

fortune the apparently unsuitable name of Blunt, replied simply, "Because that was his name." I do not vouch for this story, but I do remember that he once said in my presence that Doña Rita had been "a very wonderful person."

She is, at any rate, a very wonderful person in 'The Arrow of Gold,' though much less magical in 'The Mirror of the Sea.' She is a final answer, if it were needed, to the accusation that Conrad could not create a woman. She is, indeed, like all his best creations, in the impressionist manner. She carries with her to the end the atmosphere which she brings with her on her first physical appearance in the story:

The upward cast in the eyes of Mills who was facing the staircase made us both, Blunt and I, turn round. The woman of whom I had heard so much, in a sort of way in which I had never heard a woman spoken of before, was coming down the stairs, and my first sensation was that of profound astonishment at this evidence that she did really exist. And even then the visual impression was more of colour in a picture than of the forms of actual life. She was wearing a wrapper, a sort of dressing-gown of pale blue silk embroidered with black and gold designs round the neck and down the front, lapped round her and held together by a broad belt of the same material. Her slippers were of the same colour, with black bows at the instep. The white stairs, the deep crimson of the carpet, and the light blue of the dress made an effective combination of colour to set off the delicate carnation of that face, which, after the first glance given to the whole person, drew irresistibly your gaze to itself by an indefinable quality of charm beyond all analysis and made you think of remote races, of strange generations, of the faces of women sculptured on immemorial monuments and of those lying unsung in their tombs.

To proceed from that to the portrayal of a credible human being, with whims, fears and flippancies, is a very considerable feat of the creative imagination—all the more if, as I suspect, Conrad in his later years idealized Doña Rita and at the same time exaggerated the intimacy of his relations with her. She is one of the seductive women in English fiction—and to make her seem so was, I believe, Conrad's main purpose in writing this book.

Mr. Galsworthy, as one of Conrad's earliest admirers and friends, follows appropriately. His omnibus volume, of course, needs no excuse. It is the second and, one presumes, the concluding section of 'The Forsyte Saga.' I venture to protest against the new title as strongly as I did against the earlier. If that said too much, this says too little, and the two are not sufficiently in touch with one another for the two halves of the same work. The second half, it need hardly be said, cannot have the same value as the first, nor any of the whole as much as the earliest constituent part, 'The Man of Property.' That was a careful picture executed after a considerable lapse of time. Its successors have all been snapshots taken at progressively shorter ranges, until now we have got down to 1926. In 'Swan Song,' a book published only last year, Mr. Galsworthy described the General Strike of two years before—a very different thing from sitting down, some fifteen years later, to describe the persons and conditions of 1886. The connecting-link is Soames, and it is interesting to observe that once again Mr. Galsworthy feels moved to define his position with regard to Soames. In 1922 he said:

One has noticed that readers, as they wade on through the salt waters of the Saga, are inclined more and more to pity Soames, and to think that in doing so they are in revolt against the mood of his creator. Far from it! He, too, pities Soames, the tragedy of whose life is the very simple uncontrollable tragedy of being unlovable, without quite a thick enough skin to be thoroughly unconscious of the fact.

To-day he says:

The chronicler, catechised (as he often is) concerning Soames, knows not precisely what he stands for. Taking him for all in all he was honest, anyway. He lived and moved and had his peculiar being, and now he sleeps.

This seems to me to be the precise mood in which both author and reader should part from their

old friend. Soames is, in fact, the proof of Mr. Galsworthy's greatness as a creator and, as a final vindication, he has escaped from his creator's hands. He is one of the few characters in modern fiction who have succeeded in emerging from between the covers of the books in which they were born. He has so emerged, and it is only natural that Mr. Galsworthy should now feel as diffident in judging him as he would with any other of God's creatures.

AN ARTISTIC HANDICRAFT

Wrought Iron and its Decorative Use. By Maxwell Ayrton and Arnold Silcock. *Country Life*. 42s.

IN this handsome volume we have a very fully illustrated discussion of English smith's work, on its decorative side, for the last eight centuries—omitting the special case of armour and weapons. All smiths' work, indeed, which has lasted from Tudor or earlier times is decorative, because it is only found in positions which from their importance have guarded it from destruction. Such are the locks and bands of chests, the hinges of doors with their strap-scrolls, screens and grills, where the craftsman could allow his fancy to play round the solid foundation of his work. Thus is art produced: it is not superimposed on craftsmanship, it is a by-product of it.

The authors have written their book on a chronological basis, the first three chapters dealing with the period when iron was smelted by charcoal, to the great distress of a government concerned with shipbuilding, the remaining seven to coal-smelted iron, cheaper and more abundant. The critical period of the handicraft was in the reign of William and Mary, when the taste for splendid wrought-iron gates and railings, initiated at Hampton Court and St. Paul's Cathedral under the direction of Wren, spread over the country. Another equally important turning-point in the history of decorative ironwork dates from the time when the old practice of relying solely on the hammer and welding was abandoned, and the use of bars sawn in lengths and fitted with joints and tenons, almost as if they were wooden, was introduced.

The history of iron-working is an interesting one, and the authors have been well advised to give a summary account of it, from the meteoric iron of the East valued for sword-making, and the currency bars found in places as far apart as Britain and Siberia, and the iron pillar of unknown age at Delhi, to the birth of modern industry. A fascinating chapter deals with medieval smiths' work showing, for instance, that when Windsor Castle was built iron cost three farthings a pound and smiths about fourpence a day. The hinge was the main decoration of the door—its usual form being a crescent bisected by a bar extending out over the door. Each of these parts flourished out into ornament, and the space between was filled with swastikas, birds, beasts and ships in conventional patterns. Then the whole door was covered by an intricate scroll pattern of pure hammer work, such as that of the West door of Henry III's chapel at Windsor or the Aubrey doors at Chester Cathedral. Finally such detached work as the grille over Queen Eleanor's Tomb at Westminster and the Chichester grille at South Kensington were wrought.

Most of the fifteenth-century work left to us consists of screens such as those in the Henry V chapel at Westminster, Edward IV's at Windsor, and in numberless old churches throughout the country. The use of thin iron plates, cut into shape and perforated, and then welded into place was intro-

duced about this time. A decline in the use of iron in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries is noticed, but towards the end of the century we get such work as the gates of Ham House, made in Scotland in 1671—not 1610, as Mr. Starkie Gardner suggested. They are fully illustrated here and are refined and noble in their simplicity. Among other fine things done at this period are the chandelier hangings from St. Michael, Queenhithe, now at South Kensington, and some gates at Trinity library, Cambridge.

The last quarter of the seventeenth century was according to the authors the period of the greatest activity in the building world that has, probably, ever been experienced in England. Perhaps there was more in the abbey-building period of Stephen and Henry II, but at any rate this building, greatly influenced by French work, copied it in its use of wrought iron in decorative architectural work. The building at Hampton Court, under Wren, began with alterations in the garden and a great wrought-iron screen in the Fountain Court. The principal worker on this was Jean Tijou who for twenty-one years designed and wrought the ironwork of Hampton Court and the new St. Paul's. Tijou was a marvellous handicraftsman, and succumbed to his own dexterity by plastering the surface of his work with enrichment without regard to the effect of the whole whenever he was not restrained by Wren. Some of his *repoussé* work at St. Paul's goes far beyond the natural limitations of his material, such as the panels of the Evangelists on the Chancel Screen, but taken as a whole he was the greatest influence on English iron-work that has yet appeared.

Local work such as that of the Welsh and the West of England smiths is here amply studied, and the authors have been able to solve the mystery of the Roberts brothers of Chirk, who are now proved to be Robert and John Davies of Groes Voyle, who worked between 1702 and 1755. There is much fine work at Bristol and in the neighbourhood attributed to William Edney. Robert Bakewell of Derby was one of the English smiths inspired by Tijou, but had a lightness of touch and a sense of design all his own. A chapter of miscellaneous examples shows what a wealth of handicraftsmen was scattered over the country, whose name is lost though their work endures. Modern work, as illustrated here, seems over-elaborated or self-conscious, faults that can be remedied only by an absolute return to simplicity.

The book is well produced and has an excellent index. We should have liked a list of illustrations to assist in turning back to look up any drawing for comparison. The writing is simple and direct, and the authors must have taken great pains in their researches. We can congratulate them on a useful addition to the library of wrought-iron working, and we hope that it will aid in the revival of an artistic handicraft, which is slowly dying out of the countryside for want of work to do. The farm horse is being replaced by the tractor, which needs no shoeing, but only spare parts at intervals; the motor has expelled the carriage horse, and motor roads the riding horse; while factory-made tools are so cheap as not to be worth the trouble and expense of mending. Yet at the same time there is a growing demand among architects and house builders for iron-work wrought at the forge by just such methods as the dying industry has perfected in its centuries of existence. A few art workers in metal have set themselves to meet this demand, but it is essential that the movement should be based on a sound handicraft; art is not something added to handicraft, it comes out of complete mastery of the medium, of concentration on the task in hand. Cannot some organized attempt be made to utilize the experience of our country smiths before it is too late?

WHAT THE VINTNERS BUY

Viniana. By C. W. Berry. Constable. 10s.

THE Omarian question is answered: nothing else being one half as precious as the stuff they sell, the wisest of them buy wine out of the proceeds of selling it, a circle the very reverse of vicious. But how many of them can hope to buy such things as shed their amber or ruby glow upon Mr. Berry's pages? For here are the ancient still white Champagnes and the long-lived pre-phyllloxera Clarets, wines that have been virtually unobtainable for years. They are present, be it noted, not in reminiscence but as as things set before Mr. Berry's guests in this year of grace. His memories reach back to wines perhaps, in some instances, even greater—to Château Lafite, 1864, which he and Mr. Warner Allen agree in regarding as the greatest Claret of the century, but which, since there can be nothing better than perfection, can hardly have surpassed Château Lafite, 1875; to the still white Champagnes of 1857, 1865, 1868. Let that be; Mr. Saintsbury and some few other amateurs can also call up the memory of what the grape greatly gave when phylloxera and oidium had not smitten the vineyards. The wonder is that at this date Mr. Berry's guests should be able to sit to 1874 still Champagne, to 1865 Château Lafite, to 1869 Château Mouton-Rothschild, to 1868 Romanée. No such longevity is to be looked for in the wines from grafted vines, though, a point not made by Mr. Berry, the decline in quality, as apart from keeping-power, would seem to be so slight as to be scarcely worth a tear.

Of the genial anecdotage of this eminent wine-merchant, flavoured as it is, and as oenophile gossip always naturally tends to be, with literary allusion, we have no space to take account. For all its modest pretence of being just table talk, the little book is a contribution by one of the chief of living experts to the æsthetics of wine, and it must so be treated. First, then, it must be commended for the policy of keeping for each of the three dinners it describes within the one viticultural province. There is nothing positively wrong in beginning in Spain, visiting Germany, Bordeaux and Burgundy successively, and ending in Portugal; but this, and we wish Mr. Berry had stressed it, is the more excellent way. A few criticisms may be diffidently offered. The Claret dinner presents such an array of very great wines as few devotees can have had even in dreams; but, considering how massive and majestic Haut Brion is, may not Haut Brion, 1871, have been rather overwhelming an introduction to 1875 Château Margaux, 1865 Château Lafite, 1870 Château Latour? No such question suggests itself regarding the Burgundy dinner. But might not the Champagne dinner have been rounded off with a somewhat sweet Champagne, French fashion, instead of with the alien curiosity, Tokay?

May be, may be not: "our betters should know better than we," and Mr. Berry is not only learned as the result of his own experience but the heir of the vinous ages. Was it not to the then head of his firm that Sheridan wrote the famous punning lines?

You've made a sad Mull, Berry,
By sending your Bill, Berry,
Before it was Due, Berry;
Your father, the Elder Berry,
Wouldn't have been such a Goose, Berry, etc.

But there were Berrys before even that Elder Berry. It is probable, and part of piety to believe, that grape and berry were simultaneously created, for reciprocal support. At what period, assuming our frail humanity for the more effectual discharge of that

duty, the Berrys took the motto *Gwin o eur*, "wine from gold," and at what period abandoned it, these are matters uncertain, but the principle they have respected. The gold yielded by wine has been used to secure more wine, whence the material for this book, itself golden.

T. E. W.

MOSCOW'S TRAGIC MUSE

The New Spirit in the Russian Theatre. By Huntly Carter. Brentano. 30s.

IT was a natural result of the Russian revolution that politics should be made a hand-maid of the arts; the drama has been requisitioned as a natural prop of the Communist educational "drive" and of its "prolet-cult." The Soviet took over the theatres along with everything else and used them as sounding-boards for its gospel. That was not altogether bad for the art of the theatre, which is not the same thing as the industry of entertainment, although the two are frequently confused in debate about the drama. It brought passion into the theatre; whatever may be said against the Communists' use of the artist they did not encourage him to be a trifler or a mere ornament of after-dinner hours. They gave a curious and delightful licence to the circus in which the two clowns Bim and Bom were allowed to speak with all the privilege of the chartered jester. Acid criticisms of the Commissars, which would have meant a life-sentence if spoken in the outer world, were freely bandied about in the ring. But otherwise the author and actor have, for the most part, had to play their parts as Communists before they could remember the wider dictates of their art.

Mr. Huntly Carter had made a close and prolonged study of the Soviet theatre, kinema and radio. His book has the authority of an experience which is, we believe, unique as far as non-Russians are concerned. He is an enthusiast and expounds with gusto all the freakish theories in which the determination to innovate has plunged the theatre-craft of Moscow. He is polite to Stanislavski, that superb master of sensitive quietude in production

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who bravely carried on his own tradition amid considerable denigration and interruption and it is obvious that Mr. Carter is really more attracted by men like Meierhold and Tairov, who prefer abstractions to actualities and hurry rapidly from one notion to the next, rejoicing in an audacity which seems often to result in a mere fever of Left Wing pretentiousness. How childish the Communist theatre may be is shown by his description of Tairov's production of Saint Joan:

The objects of Bolshevik indignation and English middle-class approval were strongly emphasized by extravagance. The Dauphin was a clown, the representatives of the Church were vulgar and offensive, Saint Joan, as admirably played by Alice Koonen, wore in the trial scene a strange costume consisting of a pair of baggy hunting breeches and mediaeval armour and chains. It was more picturesque than correct. The Earl of Warwick wore an eyeglass, probably because people in Russia think it is the hall-mark of an Englishman.

To such futilities can the political fervour reduce the art of the *régisseur*.

Yet it would be unfair to suggest that the capacities of Meierhold are fully represented by the anti-British pamphleteering of 'Roar China' or those of Tairov by the anti-Fabiansim of his 'Saint Joan,' which was designed, presumably, to show up the bourgeois nature of the Irish Socialist. Mr. Carter recounts the whole activities of these and other men and lets us see an experimental fury which is strongly contrasted with the complacent torpor of the theatrical-craftsmen in our own and other countries. The Jews are apparently making special and brilliant contributions of their own; Governmental pressure relaxes and the artist is no longer condemned to be one of a proletarian "boosting" party. It is a pity that Mr. Carter writes with so much of Mr. Polly's lust for "verboo juice." He is often prolix, repetitive, and pompous, but his subject is profoundly interesting and successfully overwhelms the author's tendency to loiter amid a largesse of abstract and annoying phraseology.

ITALY TO-DAY

Italy. By Luigi Villari. Benn. 18s.

The Pope is King. By "Civis Romanus." Benn. 10s. 6d.

THE belief which is prevalent in some quarters that the British public to-day takes no interest in international problems is apparently not shared by publishers, for there seems to be no end to the stream of books dealing with foreign questions, particularly Fascism and Bolshevism. In the present instance both volumes are of more than ordinary interest, for Signor Villari is the leading Fascist publicist of the day, while the writer who has taken the pseudonym of "Civis Romanus" is clearly an authority on his subject.

Had Signor Villari been writing in the eighteenth century when sub-titles were in vogue, he might have described his work as "Italy, or how the last century of Italian history has led up to the triumph of Benito Mussolini." The book, although forming part of 'The Modern World' series, is neither more nor less than a piece of Fascist propaganda, and cannot, therefore, be judged by the standards applicable to ordinary history. Whether such a book is altogether suited to a series which professes "to provide a balanced survey . . . of the tendencies and forces . . . which are moulding the lives of contemporary states" is doubtful, and for Italy the reader must be prepared to substitute Fascism on nearly every page.

In his analysis of Italian foreign policy since the *Risorgimento* the author is at times a little too inclined to take the narrow view. It is true that his country, although a Great Power, was not regarded quite as an equal by the others, and the reason is not

far to seek; it lies in the selfish policy which characterized successive Italian administrations, combined with their failure to fight a successful war. Napoleon III made United Italy possible, and his reward was to be left to his fate in 1870; Germany gave the new state both Venetia and the prestige of her alliance at a time when Italy had not a friend in Europe, and all she received in return was a stab in the back in the late war; while the seizure of Tripoli, as later that of Corfu, was a flagrant violation of the rights of others. Until Italy, democratic or Fascist, shows herself a little less grasping, she must expect to be regarded with a certain amount of suspicion by her neighbours, especially when her gains are invariably due to the victories of other nations.

Nor, to pass from external to internal politics, is Signor Villari's account of the origin of Fascism entirely satisfactory. He ignores altogether the influence of the French Nationalists, particularly Maurras, upon it, as he does that of Georges Sorel, to whom Signor Mussolini owes most of his economic theories. It is not every reader, too, who will be prepared to agree that Fascism is justified in the repressive measures it adopts towards its opponents, nor is the supposed analogy with the treatment of the Jacobites a particularly happy one. Walpole did his best to conciliate the enemies of the new dynasty, and yet the Forty-Five came within an ace of overturning it; the *Duce* has pursued the opposite policy, with what results the next few years will show.

On the other hand, the progress of Italy during the past seven years has been extraordinary, and it must be obvious even to the most convinced democrat that Signor Mussolini rescued the country from chaos. Where his apologists, including Signor Villari in this present work, err is in attempting to establish a dogma of Fascist infallibility: were they content to base the movement's claim for support, not upon its supposed avoidance of errors of every sort, but upon the fact that, with all its failings, it has given Italy a better government than she has known for centuries, they would not only be on far safer ground, but would be much more likely to gain the sympathy of the British public.

"Civis Romanus" is as impartial as Signor Villari is the reverse, and his book is undoubtedly the better for it. He makes the distinction, which has escaped most English critics, between the Lateran Treaty and the Concordat, and shows that while the former settles an old problem, the latter is bound to raise several new ones. Already the question is being asked whether the Pope is to become Signor Mussolini's chaplain, or the *Duce* the Papal mass-server, and it is clear from the desire of both "to have the last word" that the Concordat has not yet bridged the gulf between the supporters of a totalitarian state and those of a Catholic Church.

Even among members of the Roman communion doubts exist whether the Vatican has done wisely in once more assuming control of education and marriage in a modern state, and whether it would not, in the long run, have been better if the Church had contented itself with absolute liberty such as it possesses in the United States and Brazil. Clericalism begets anti-clericalism, and both the Pope and Signor Mussolini appear to be laying up a great deal of trouble for themselves in rejecting Cavour's old policy of a free Church in a free state. The revival of the Temporal Power, even within narrow limits, has already provoked unseemly mirth in the non-Catholic world, while the apparent approval by the Pope of Fascism at the very moment that he condemned the *Action Française*, cannot but give rise to the belief that in Papal eyes the difference between Signor Mussolini and M. Maurras is that between success and failure, and that at the Vatican, as elsewhere, kissing goes by favour.

Book Bargains

Bernard Shaw's *St. Joan*. Illustrated. Limited Edition. Folio, fine copy. 1924. £5 5s.
 Greville Memoirs. 8 vols. 1875. £3.
 Works of Edward FitzGerald, translator of Omar Khayyam. 2 vols. 1887. 30s.
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 Thiers's History of the French Revolution, Portraits and other illustrations. 5 vols. London 1833. £3 10s.
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AN AUSTRALIAN TRAVELLER

The Pleasant Career of a Spendthrift. By George Meudell. Routledge. 10s. 6d.

IT is gratifying to find a traveller whose heart still fondly turns to home from four hundred steamships and six hundred hotels. Mr. Meudell is by no means one of those disgruntled voyagers who praise every country but their own; he has journeyed in forty countries over a distance equal to sixteen times the earth's equatorial circuit, but has never found anything to surpass Australia, though he admits that there is "no such picturesque country elsewhere as New Zealand," and places the Taj Mahal as one of the "two finest sights on earth" beside that of Carbine winning the Melbourne Cup in 1890. He allows that Bali, in the Dutch East Indies, is "the island of the most beautiful women," but this fact does not shake his deep-seated conviction that "the Australian woman is the healthiest, sanest and most beautiful in the world." The three most wonderful sights on earth, it is true, lie outside Australia. They are the Grand Canyon of Colorado, the Niagara Falls and the view of the Himalayas from Darjeeling. Mr. Meudell rambles in his book as widely and as rapidly as he seems to have travelled over land and sea, and it is always entertaining to read his hasty but obviously sincere notes on the places that he has seen.

Our own country does not seem to have gratified Mr. Meudell. He regards London with Cobbett's eyes, as "a great wen" upon the face of England. He finds it repulsive, hideous, unattractive. "London possesses the narrowness of Canton, the noise of Chicago, the vulgarity of New York, the crowding of Calcutta, and the filthiness of Buenos Ayres." These are bitter words. "The sun cannot penetrate the London fog, a canopy of smut, a shroud of soot." Londoners hate fresh air—not unnaturally in view of the perpetual fog—and never open their windows. Thus a London house is "dark, airless, chilly and stuffy." The Londoner eats nothing but stale food, unless he is very rich or a friend takes him to the best hotels. "The food of the middle classes comes to the table thawed, and from several to many days old." No wonder the Londoner is "thin, anæmic and dyspeptic." In the lower middle-class houses the staple diet consists of "the cheapest and poorest fish, always smoked or salted . . . This salty diet is responsible for the Britisher's tremendous drinking habits." It may also explain "the rising tide of universal bad manners peculiar to all Londoners of every class." Faithful are the wounds of a friend, and Mr. Meudell's well-meant criticisms encourage us to abjure the fatal habit of taking home a tasty bloater or a fourteen-day-old egg.

In addition to his record of travel, Mr. Meudell gives us many interesting reminiscences of Australian finance. He began life as a bank clerk, and writes scathingly about the "get-rich-quick" methods of his countrymen in the 'nineties. Perhaps his most interesting pages describe the Bendigo gold rush, when "gold was everywhere—on and just under the surface in flakes, as dust, in cubes, in lumps, as small specimens attached to quartz . . . all over the land." His father stopped one day on the way to church and filled his handkerchief with a mass of white pipeclay which contained £72 worth of virgin gold. A day's work often yielded £2,000. Africa was not in it with Bendigo for golden joys.

The price of 'Tramping to Lourdes,' published by Methuen and reviewed in these pages on August 3, is 5s. and not as stated in the review.

NEW FICTION

By L. P. HARTLEY

Strange Moon. By T. S. Stribling. Heinemann. 7s. 6d.

Dark Star. By Lorna Moon. Gollancz. 7s. 6d.

Shanty Irish. By Jim Tully. Knopf. 7s. 6d.

Windfall's Eve. By E. V. Lucas. Methuen. 7s. 6d.

'STRANGE MOON,' described as simply as possible, is an adventure story with a love interest. But it is written by a man of sophisticated mind, to whom such simple fare as love and adventure would by itself be insipid. In the work of an author who compares the moon to a silver burial urn we do not expect to find straight issues between black-hearted pirates and clean-limbed heroes.

The scene of 'Strange Moon' is Venezuela; its subject, the attempt of Manners, agent of an American company, to secure an oil concession claimed both by the aristocrat, Señor Ramón Valera and the peon Pacheco. The aristocrat and the peon hate each other; they also hate the American intruder. His methods, if commercial, are straightforward; theirs are exceedingly devious, alternating between professions of friendship and attempts at assassination. Manners, though far from being a mere *corpus vile* for the manifestations of Latin and native insincerity, is not a clever man; it is only gradually that he realizes how much of his comparative immunity (several times he is nearly killed) he owes to the good offices of the beautiful dancer Sola, apparently the daughter of Pacheco, but really, we ultimately learn, coming of much more respectable parentage. . .

The whole book is a confusing medley of appearances and realities which Mr. Stribling never puts in their true relationship, though he clears up some of the mystery at the end. The author of 'Fombombo' is an attractive writer with a sharp, bright, original mind and an amusing turn of phrase. Manners, though always aware of his American citizenship, takes it quite lightly:

"Well, we're both good Americans" [says Crowe].

"I don't care if we are. I can't help myself, and you'll get over yours."

Mr. Stribling is particularly happy in conveying the secret thrill and elation born of hazardous undertakings; for vividness and excitement it would be hard to beat Manners's struggles in the bushmaster's deadly embrace, or his sensations on the perilous "vine bridge," with Ramón hacking away in the darkness at the far end, so that "the regular blows of the machete on the vine registered through Manners's thighs." If Mr. Stribling sometimes gives the impression that he relates these hair-breadth escapes with his tongue in his cheek, at any rate he takes seriously their effect on the imagination and nervous system of his hero. Regarded as a whole, like so many "clever" modern novels, 'Strange Moon' gives the impression of having been written as a *tour de force*, an entertainment, the brilliant literary escapade of an ingenious mind. Mr. Stribling condescends to his theme, he is not mastered by it; so that in spite of the impressiveness of its separate qualities it lacks unity and compelling force. Its charm depends upon artifice and upon the quality of the author's mind; but it is an enjoyable book.

How unhelpful these astronomical titles are. 'Dark Star,' to judge from its name, and from the name of its author might be a sequel to 'Strange Moon'; in point of fact it belongs to a different firmament. It is romantic through and through; Mr. Stribling, virtuoso though he is, and quite capable of under-

Sayings of Famous Men

SPURGEON.

"STEER your ship by the stars, but don't forget the sands," wrote C. H. Spurgeon—in other words, plan your life's work with high ideals and ambition, but don't neglect to protect yourself from the daily dangers that surround you. So many men in their efforts to secure success in their ultimate careers overlook the means at hand to safeguard them from immediate danger. A good life policy provides immediate safety while the fortune is in the making.

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standing what romance means to other people (his book proves that) could never abandon himself to the orgy of tormented day-dreaming which Miss Lorna Moon has set before the public. Theme and setting are as romantic as they can be. Nancy is the daughter either of Willie Weams, a vagabond of the lowest type, or of Ramsey Gordon, a relation of the Fasseferns, a Scottish family of immense antiquity. In either case she is illegitimate; but the problem of her parentage occupies her ceaselessly; her very happiness depends on it, and most of the crises of her life have some reference to it. She is a girl of ungovernable emotions, emotions which Miss Moon records with a fidelity amounting to baldness. Their violent realism is strangely out of keeping with the romantic tenour of the book; it is almost as if a family tree suddenly burst into leaf—indeed, into rank, luxurious foliage, so completely unedited is the revelation of Nancy's mind and heart. Artistically considered, the analysis of Nancy's emotions is perhaps the best thing in the book, however brutal in its out-spokenness. Any violent act or passion puts Miss Moon's pen on its mettle; it is never more effective than in the scene where Divot Meg murders Nancy's mother. The gusto with which this is described is faintly nauseating: indeed, there are many passages in which one realizes how right convention was to impose the veil which Miss Moon rudely snatches aside.

The plot itself is negligible. Divot Meg is like a parody of one of Scott's characters, and Nancy, though credible as a hot-blooded young animal, is unconvincing as the victim of illegitimacy and wounded pride. Her immediate sensations and emotions have a plausibility denied to her aspirations and ideals. The book is singularly unequal, with its extremes of good and bad, and to estimate Miss Moon's future as a novelist would be a difficult task.

'Shanty Irish' deals with Irish families who emigrated to America in the middle of the nineteenth century. They go through hard times which leave them little room for any but rudimentary emotions. Mr. Tully's point of view is objective, and of all the senses he relies chiefly upon the visual. His descriptions are concrete and vivid and exaggerated:

My father was a gorilla-built man. His arms were long and crooked. The ends of a carrot-shaped moustache touched his shoulder blades. It gave his mouth an appearance of ferocity not in the heart. Squat, agile and muscular, he weighed nearly one hundred and ninety pounds. His shoulders were early stooped, as from carrying the inherited burdens of a thousand dead Irish peasants.

A man of some imagination, he loved the tingle of warm liquor in his blood. He was for fifty years a ditch digger.

There is little more to be said about him. The tingle of warm liquor in the blood is all very well to feel, but almost impossible to write about. Mr. Tully, finding the emotions of his characters unpromising material, confines himself to enumerating facts about them:

Jack Cullen was said to have been in love with her. His wife sued for a divorce. The beautiful girl was named. The lawyer left town. The divorce was granted. The girl was said to have died by choking to death upon (sic) the core of an apple. She was pitied by all. All of what happened to the lawyer no man knows.

One could hardly blame grandeur for viewing with a disdainful smile these too short, too simple annals.

In 'Windfall's Eve' Mr. Lucas's wisdom and delightful sense of humour fall on rather stony ground. His hero wins a large prize in a sweepstake, and the consequences of sudden wealth are the theme of this rambling, go-as-you-please story. It has charming passages, of course, and that irresponsibility which is Mr. Lucas's secret; but the charm is too thinly spread to be a substitute for sustained interest.

ACROSTICS

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 387

(TWELFTH OF OUR TWENTY-EIGHTH QUARTER)

(CLOSING DATE: First post Thursday, August 22)

FAMED NOVELISTS THEY WERE, THESE LADIES TWIN:

A CLOSER LINK I'VE SOUGHT, BUT SOUGHT IN VAIN.

ONE IN HER MORALS WAS NOT OVER NICE;

THE OTHER—WELL, HER HUSBAND HAD HIS PRICE.

1. She sounded the timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea.
2. An error's been made; who can put it right? He.
3. A call for assistance! Obey it, Tom, quick!
4. He slept through the lattice and felt somewhat sick.
5. In the midst of this walk with some male folk you'll meet.
6. He was, when he saw three men killed in the street.
7. An officer I, sir, of London's fair city.
8. Practised only by cannibals, strangers to pity.
9. A refuge affords to the rabbit and rat.
10. Curtail one whose skin is as black as my hat.
11. This is Latin for man, as no doubt you're aware.
12. I frequent cattle-pastures, so look for me there.

Solution of Acrostic No. 385

Pa dish aH
O pinionativ E
N ea R
T hr Oe
I ce-bir D¹
U nobservan T
Sc rat cH
P orpois E
I nsinuatin G
L arde R²
A phrodit E
T affet A
E scor T

¹ Ice-bird: the little auk, or sea-dove. *Chambers's Dictionary*
"These birds are . . . also met with at Newfoundland, where they are called Ice-Birds."—*Bewick's British Birds*, ii. 173.
² The Shrike or Butcher-bird forms a "larder" of insects, etc., spitted on thorns near its nest.

ACROSTIC No. 385.—The winner is Mr. J. R. Cripps, Sherwood Cottage, Tadworth, Surrey, who has chosen as his prize 'The Good Companions,' by J. B. Priestley, published by Heinemann and reviewed in our columns on August 3. Forty-two other competitors named this book, nine 'General Louis Botha,' eleven 'The Song of My Life,' etc.

ALSO CORRECT.—A. E., Ceyx, Doric, M. East, Fossil, Hanworth, H. C. M., Yendu.

ONE LIGHT WRONG.—Armada, A. de V. Blathwayt, Boskeris, Mrs. Robert Brown, Buns, Mrs. J. Butler, Carlton, Miss Carter, Chailey, J. Chambers, Clam, Dhualt, Ursula D'Ot, Farsdon, Cyril E. Ford, Gay, Glamis, Harbord-House, Iago, Jop, John Lennie, Mrs. Lole, Madge, Martha, Met, George W. Miller, Mrs. Milne, N. O. Sellam, Margaret Owen, Rabbits, Rand, Shorwell, Sisypheus, St. Ives, Hon. R. G. Talbot, Thora, C. G. Tosswill, Tyro, C. J. Warden.

TWO LIGHTS WRONG.—Mrs. R. H. Boothroyd, Mrs. Alice Crooke, D. L., Estela, G. M. Fowler, Jeff, Lilian, F. M. Petty, Stucco. All others more.

ACROSTIC No. 384.—TWO LIGHTS WRONG.—Cyril E. Ford. LADY MOTTRAM.—Lights 2 and 3 were wrong. Opium-taker and Opium-smoker could not be accepted, because they completely miss the point of the Light. The title of De Quincey's famous book is 'Confessions of an English Opium-eater.' It is this masterpiece of English prose that we are entitled to boast about, not the fact that there are people in England addicted to opium-smoking, etc.

E. B.—See above, please.

MRS. BOOTHROYD.—Your solution of No. 383 did not reach me. It must have been lost in the post.

RAND.—Horse-racing is often called "the sport of kings" in books and newspapers. Who first so entitled it, I do not know—Disraeli, perhaps. Since the Middle Ages, English and European monarchs have not done much in the way of Hawking, I think, even if some of them still have Hereditary Grand Falconers. Tens of thousands of the common people make racing one of their pastimes, but the hawking of collar-studs, etc., can scarcely rank as an amusement.

MRS. MILNE.—Please see my reply to "Rand."

CHAILEY AND R. H. B.—The idea implicit in Repartee and Response is that of answering, not of following; they follow a remark or question only as Sunday follows Saturday, day night, and night day. A Retinue or Suite is a train of followers; to follow is its *raison d'être*.

OUR 28TH QUARTERLY COMPETITION.—After the 10th round the leaders are: Clam, N. O. Sellam (2 down); Sisypheus (3); Met and Yendu (4); Tyro (5); J. R. Cripps and Fossil (6); A. E., Boskeris, Mrs. J. Butler, Gay, Jeff, Madge, Martha and C. J. Warden (7 down).

THE CITY

Lombard Street, Thursday

GOLD and money considerations still continue to sway sentiment on the Stock Exchange. The unexpected raising from five to six per cent. of the Federal Reserve Bank Rate in New York last week produced an immediate sharp marking down in quotations of most securities on the following day, and the unsettlement thus created was not allayed until the Bank of England had given certain guarded assurances to the discount market that the English Bank Rate was not likely to follow suit, at any rate, for the present. The position was complicated by the difficulties which have arisen at the Hague in connexion with the reparations question, but the effect of this has worn off as the result of the firm stand which is being taken there by British representatives. For the time being exports of gold to France appear to have ceased, and there has been a recovery in most of the Continental Exchanges. On the other hand, the American Exchange has moved against us, and at the time of writing there is talk of gold being engaged for export to America.

It is fairly obvious that gold and money conditions will continue to exert their influences on stock market sentiment for some time to come. The stocks of gold at the Bank of England are now considerably below the minimum fixed by the Cunliffe Commission, and until these stocks are replenished and provision made for later demands we are not likely to see easier conditions in the money market. For this reason we must look for fluctuating quotations on the Stock Exchange, but these, if a choice is carefully made, should provide opportunities for the investor who is prepared to lock away his stock for future appreciation.

THE PRIMITIVA GAS COMPANY

It is a long time—June 13, 1925—since I referred to the position of the Primitiva Gas Company, of Buenos Ayres. Much has happened since that time to the benefit of the company. Remarkable progress has been made in the profit-earning capacity of the business accompanied by a steady reduction of debenture debt and an appreciable increase in the reserve. Net profits, which in 1924 were £39,377, increased to £222,521 last year—in other words the percentage earned on capital has risen from 1.7 per cent. to 9.51 per cent. in the same period. Last year a dividend of 5 per cent. was paid as compared with nothing in the four previous years. During the last few weeks an arrangement of the utmost importance to this company has been made with La Compania Hispano de Electricidad, Madrid, commonly known as Chade, which, since 1921, has owned the electrical portion of the original Primitiva Company and now supplies electric power to Buenos Ayres and neighbourhood.

This company is one of the powerful group controlled by Sofina, another powerful corporation with worldwide interests. As a result of the arrangement, the Primitiva Company are in possession of £1,000,000 of cheap capital for further developments. Further, the Primitiva Company has formed a holding company, Primitiva Holdings Limited, into which shareholders have been asked to exchange their shares on a share for share basis. The result will be that dealings in Primitiva gas shares will shortly cease, their place being taken by the shares of Primitiva Holdings in which there is already a market. The latter are quoted around 35s., and on the basis of last year's

dividend give an insignificant yield. The new company, however, should enable marked progress to be made from now onwards, and it should be remembered further that even the very satisfactory progress made during the last four years has been achieved in the face of intense competition and during a period of drastic reorganization, which factors will no longer exist. The prospects of the company, consequently, under the new association are extremely favourable and a considerably higher value for these shares seems likely within a year or two.

WATNEY, COMBE, REID

For the last two or three weeks brewery securities have been under a cloud on fears of legislation detrimental to the trade. A Royal Commission is being appointed to investigate the whole field of legislation relating to the sale and supply of intoxicating liquor, and in this connexion it is interesting to remember that as recently as 1927 the Southborough Committee unanimously decided that no case had been established for the extension of the Carlisle system, and as nothing has happened since then which should make the new commission take a contrary opinion, brewery interests do not seem to be worrying very much about it. As regards local option, this appears to have been put into the background by the advent of the char-à-banc, and it would seem that the brewery view is the correct one—that they have little to fear. They appear to be proceeding on the right lines, with the result that the public-house of to-day is usually a place where the public can secure food as well as drink, and it is worth noting in this connexion that the consumption of beer does not increase by any great amount. Where the brewery gains is in the higher rent which the public-house commands as a result of the profits which its tenants obtain on their catering side. These remarks are suggested by the speech of Sir Richard Garton at last week's annual meeting of Watney, Combe, Reid.

During the past year this company acquired the whole of the ordinary shares in Huggins and Company, and also purchased the London and Burton Brewery at Ratcliff, the finance of which was effected by the issue of £2,500,000 of redeemable $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Debentures. Despite the fact that the full benefit of these acquisitions was not experienced in the year just ended, the profits of Watney, Combe, Reid showed an increase of nearly £100,000 on the year at £1,442,945, and the dividend on the £3,185,410 deferred ordinary stock was raised by 1 per cent. to 20 per cent. for the year. This was effected after charging against the profits for the year the whole of the expenses incurred in connexion with the acquisition of the above-mentioned breweries and also in connexion with the debenture issue. Further improvement is to be looked for in the current year, and the deferred shares, consequently, seem an attractive purchase at their present price of 63s. On last year's dividend basis, the yield available is £6 7s. per cent.

WOLVERHAMPTON CORPORATION

The announcement is made by Williams Deacon's Bank Limited that in order to prepare the interest warrants due on September 1 on Wolverhampton Corporation 3 per cent. redeemable stock 1924-54, the books will be closed from Monday next until the end of the month inclusive.

COMPANY MEETING

In this issue will be found a report of the meeting of Messrs. Watney, Combe, Reid, and Co., Ltd.

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Company Meeting

WATNEY, COMBE, REID, & CO.

RECORD YEAR'S PROFITS

SIR RICHARD GARTON'S SPEECH

The Ordinary General Meeting of Watney, Combe, Reid, and Co., Ltd., was held on August 9 at the Charing Cross Hotel, W.C., Sir Richard Garton, G.B.E. (the chairman), presiding.

The Secretary (Mr. H. S. King), having read the notice convening the meeting and the auditor's report, the chairman said:

Ladies and gentlemen, as this is the first occasion on which I have had the honour of addressing you as your chairman, I am sure I shall be carrying out your wishes if I preface my remarks about the accounts with a reference to the deep regret which I and all my colleagues felt when, in the autumn of last year, Sir Cosmo Bonsor decided that the time had come for him to vacate the chair. It would be impossible for me in the short time at my disposal to tell you even a little of all that you as stockholders owe to Sir Cosmo's foresight and sound judgment. I will content myself by expressing to him, on your behalf, the sincere hope that he will long be able to give us the benefit of his invaluable counsels. (Hear, hear.)

THE ACCOUNTS

Well, gentlemen, I think the accounts are very fully set out, and require but little explanation, apart from the few changes which have occurred in them since we last met. I take it you will agree that the result of our efforts is eminently satisfactory. We ourselves are quite pleased with the work that we have done. You will notice that the large figure on the creditor side of the balance-sheet described as brewery buildings, freeholds, etc., has increased from £12,643,018 to £13,754,720. We tell you in the report that the whole of the £400,000 carried to reserve last year has been expended in the purchase of additional public-houses, in improving our properties, and in converting leaseholds into freeholds. The remainder of the increase is due to the acquisition of the business of the London and Burton Brewery, Ratcliff, which was completed in April last.

That brings me to the question of the policy of your directors in effecting these brewery purchases at admittedly high prices. Our aim is to keep our mash tuns working at full pressure, so that our great breweries at Pimlico, Mortlake, and Isleworth can be kept working at the highest possible standard of efficiency. It is obvious that if your mash tuns are not full, your overhead charges per barrel are correspondingly higher than they should be, with a consequent diminution of profit. With this fact in mind, we decided to buy the entire share capital of Huggins and Co., Ltd., and also to acquire the London and Burton Brewery, which I have just referred to. As, however, we are only shareholders in Huggins and Co., you will find our holding standing in the item of trade investments, which accounts for the large increase in that figure to £2,044,990.

Turning now to the profit and loss account, you will notice that the profit on trading—including Isleworth and London and Burton profits—totals £2,109,459, an increase of £146,343, which I am sure you will agree is satisfactory—in fact, so satisfactory that we decided to write off against the year the whole of the expenses of acquiring Huggins and Co.'s share capital, and the London and Burton Brewery, and of issuing our new Debentures, totalling together £114,078. That is a non-recurring item to which I would like to call your attention. We fully recognize that we should have been quite justified in spreading that expense over, say, three years, but we preferred to make a clean cut. In spite of that you will find that the net profit for the year is £1,442,945, which is a record in the history of the company.

PROPOSED ROYAL COMMISSION

I should like to say a few words regarding the outlook of the brewing trade, especially in view of the fact that the Government is about to appoint a Royal Commission "to investigate the whole field of legislation relating to the sale and supply of intoxicating liquor." We are given to understand that a section of the Government supporters are in favour of the extension of the Carlisle Scheme to the country as a whole. Now the Southborough Committee, a very influential and impartial body, came to the unanimous conclusion so recently as 1927 that a case had not been established for the extension of the Carlisle system to any other area, much less to the country as a whole. I, for one, do not believe that since 1927 any developments have taken place in that system, or any change in the country generally, which will make it possible for the new Royal Commission to come to any other conclusion.

Prohibition as a practical solution of what is known as the "Drink Problem" has, to put it bluntly, proved itself a disastrous failure, and, if it were not for the many vested interests which have grown up in America since its inception, it would no longer be the law of that country. Local option is also thoroughly discredited, and is generally recognized as being merely the thin edge of the wedge to the introduction of Prohibition. Taking it all round, I do not think we have much to fear from the new enquiry about to be started. The trade has never stood higher in the public estimation than it does to-day, and was never run on better or cleaner lines. It is gratifying to know that there is now general public appreciation of the houses and service which brewers provide.

ATTITUDE OF THE AUTHORITIES

Some of you may know the Rev. Basil Jellicoe, of the St. Mary's Mission in Somers Town, who spends his whole life tending the spiritual needs of slum-dwellers. In a recent number of his magazine he says: "It would seem that public opinion is becoming a good deal more enlightened about the public-house question than it used to be, but there are still a good many persons who do not realize that the working man goes to the 'pub,' not in order to get drunk, but in order that he may meet his friends. We have yet to convince many of the authorities that their attitude to 'pubs' is unsound—they are firmly convinced that the way to put down excessive drinking is to make it uncomfortable, and although endless statistics are available, they are hard to convince."

It is interesting to note that in all the many houses we own in London and the suburbs—a very large number indeed—during the last twelve months there has not been one single conviction for drunkenness.

BREWERS' GRIEVANCES

"Security of Tenure" is another subject in connection with which brewers have a very real grievance. It takes a bold man to spend many thousands of pounds in improving his properties, knowing that if cases of drunkenness occur in the house he may straight away lose the licence, and therefore his trade. We hope that the Royal Commission will do something to remove this legitimate grievance, which tends to retard progress. May we also express the hope that they will give us uniformity of hours, and thus remove one of the scandals which the law allows to exist to-day? I refer to the rush of people which occurs on the border-line between two districts which have different closing hours. It makes the work of licensees and the police unnecessarily difficult, and, so far as I can see, benefits nobody. What it does is to give us an object-lesson of what would always be occurring on "border-lines" if we had local option in this country.

SERVICES OF THE STAFF

It only remains for me to say a word about the excellent work done by our workpeople and staff, which has contributed so largely towards the successful year's working. I know of no company which has a keener or more loyal staff than we have, and I should like, on your behalf, to express our thanks to them for the splendid service they have rendered. (Applause.)

Now, ladies and gentlemen, I have said enough and, unless anyone wishes to ask me any questions, I will put the usual resolutions to the meeting.

Several speakers congratulated the chairman on the result of the year's operations. The chairman replied to a few questions, and then moved the adoption of the report and accounts.

Colonel O. P. Serocold, C.M.G. (deputy chairman) seconded the resolution and it was carried unanimously.

The dividends, as proposed, were approved; the retiring director, Mr. A. Holte Macpherson, was re-elected; and the auditor, Mr. Charles P. Saunders (Messrs. Kemp Chatteris Nichols Sendall and Co.), was appointed.

Mr. E. Spyer proposed a resolution placing on record high appreciation of the services rendered by the retiring chairman, Sir H. Cosmo O. Bonsor, Bt., as chairman of the company since its formation.

This resolution was seconded by Mr. A. Benjamin and carried unanimously amid applause.

Sir Cosmo Bonsor acknowledged the compliment, and the proceedings terminated with a vote of thanks to the chairman, directors, and staff, proposed by Mr. T. Binsted and seconded by Mr. Percival Wolton.

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